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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Getting Good Value

Washington, D.C., school superintendent Franklin Smith has had a tough time. Almost everything he's tried to do has been severely criticized. Now, Smith is getting his first good reviews from the press because he wants to hire a private company to run some D.C. schools.

Why not? When we need expertise, we usually turn to law, accounting, architecture or engineering firms. They have the expertise. If D.C. schools need good management, why not go to a company that can provide it?

The company Smith has in mind is Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI). But unlike established law and accounting firms, EAI is new to school management. It doesn't have a staff with a track record of having managed and improved tough urban schools. Expecting EAI to make substantial improvements in D.C. schools, where all others have thus far failed, is like asking a kid fresh out of law school to handle the case of the century.

But hasn't EAI been successful in Baltimore? (Weren't Smith and D.C. school board members impressed with what they saw there?) That depends on what you mean by success. EAI was brought in because of poor student academic achievement, but it's being proclaimed a success—in an educational version of bait-and-switch—because schools *look* so much better. Parents, students and teachers are thrilled that the schools have been painted, trash removed and some computers brought in. These are all desirable, but proclaiming this *educational* success is like awarding four stars to a greasy spoon because someone has renovated the booths and bought the waitresses new uniforms.

One of the strong selling points for EAI is that it provides better management for the same cost. This, it turns out, is just not true. Baltimore spends an average of $5500 a year for each pupil. Since there are overhead costs, no school actually gets $5500 per student, but EAI does. Furthermore, if schools lose students during the school year, they lose money or staff, but EAI keeps the full $5500 per pupil, even if some kids never show up after the first few days. Contrary to what the public has been told, EAI schools are getting more money to educate each child than any other schools in Baltimore.

Should school systems hire private companies? That question is no different from one facing companies in the private sector that must decide what they will manufacture and do for themselves and what goods and services they will buy from other companies. Can the outside company provide higher quality? At the same, or lower, cost? Does it have a track record of reliability? Of course, if you're buying door knobs or hub caps, these questions are easier to answer than with more complex items and services. Determining whether or not student achievement has been improved will be very tough.

Should school systems hire private companies? That question is no different from one facing private-sector companies that must decide what they will do for themselves and what they will buy from others.

We may never know whether EAI improves student achievement in Baltimore. Suppose that test scores go up a few points. Is the same test being used throughout so that there's comparability? Is there any control for the high rate of student mobility? Have some low-scoring students been encouraged to go elsewhere so they don't pull down the averages? Are children who are not proficient in English excused from taking the test? Are students coached on the tests before taking them? To the extent that these practices exist, have they increased, decreased or remained the same since EAI took over? Unless we know the answers to these questions, we won't really know if EAI made a difference since there are many ways of improving test scores without improving student achievement.

If we are to know the truth about EAI's results, it is essential that there be evaluations of their program by a group that is independent, knowledgeable about measuring student achievement honestly and accurately, and has a reputation for doing it right. Schools are political institutions. Mayors, superintendents and school boards who hire outside companies have a vested interest in getting results that look good—whether or not student achievement has improved—because the political stakes are high. Those whose political careers are on the line can no more be trusted to give an honest evaluation than a for-profit company that is interested in holding on to a lucrative contract.

If Superintendent Smith and the D.C. board are smart, they'll think twice about hiring a company that has yet to produce academic results. But if they do hire an outside company—with or without a track record—honest, competent, independent evaluation must be part of the game plan.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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Back Issues and Reception
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Cover by Matthew Martin for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 18. TRB will return next week.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** TNR's gay obsession, Republican *bon mots*, English pots &c.

6 **THE EDITORS** ALL IN THE FAMILY Remove the barriers to transracial adoption.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Clinton's Whitewater stonewalling, Zhirinovskyism &c.

9 **DOUGLAS G. McGRATH** THE HAPPY DANE Hamlet on Prozac.

9 **PAUL OFFNER** TARGET THE KIDS Welfare reform is desperately needed; but effective reform is way too expensive. A proposal to break the logjam.

11 **ANNA HUSARSKA** STEPANAKERT POSTCARD: BURNED-OUT Nagorno-Karabakh's embers.

12 **KENNETH R. TIMMERMAN** GOING BALLISTIC How we gave North Korea the bomb.

15 **KENNETH WEINSTEIN** MR. FRENCH Edouard Balladur's politics of nostalgia.

18 **JACOB WEISBERG** DIES IRA Why is Clinton's health care plan analytically sound, politically naive and pathologically hubristic? Because it was devised by Ira Magaziner. A short history of his previous disasters.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: SPIELBERG REVISITED For *Schindler's List*—again.

27 **JED PERL** THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY *Mark Rothko* by James E. B. Breslin

32 **JACOB HEILBRUNN** CONTINENTAL DRIFT *In Europe's Name* by Timothy Garton Ash; *The German Revolution of 1989* edited by Gert-Joachim Glaessner and Ian Wallace; *Germany Divided* by A. James McAdams

35 **KARL KIRCHWEY** POEM *Sonogram*

36 **TAMAR JACOBY** AFTER BIGOTRY *The Scar of Race* by Paul M. Sniderman and Thomas Piazza

39 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** DARK MAGIC *The Phantom Empire* by Geoffrey O' Brien

42 **LEON WIESELTIER** WASHINGTON DIARIST: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NAZI KIND

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CORRESPONDENCE

Awake

To the editors:

It is getting quite tedious to find almost every other issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC dealing with issues of homosexuality and gay rights. While I am not gay, some of my best friends are. My children play with the children of the lesbian couple next door. I am a card-carrying member of the ACLU. I vote Democrat. I take no issue with the sexuality of the editors. That is not any of my business. However, THE NEW REPUBLIC is rapidly becoming a Johnny One-Note. My interest in this issue has been long satisfied by the articles previously published on the subject. It's time to move on. While the issue of gay rights may command the full attention of those involved in the struggle, the interests of your readership are broader.

ALAN BERKENWALD
Haydenville, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Rather than present my treatment of the complex issue of outing, Paul Berman dismisses outing as "blackmail," an iron-fisted denouncement, without any discussion ("Democracy and Homosexuality," December 20, 1993). Some gay people see outing as a weapon to use against others. I disagree with them, because, as I state in my book, "it makes the revelation of homosexuality into a punishment." I do believe, however, that we must equalize the treatment of homosexuality and heterosexuality in the media. Every day the press discusses aspects of public figures' heterosexuality when pertinent to a news story (and often when not very pertinent), whether or not the subjects want these facts reported. I advocate open discussion in the media of the homosexuality of public figures—and *only* public figures—when relevant to news stories. The test of relevancy—and of public figure status—will of course differ among news organizations, and no doubt people's biases will cloud their decisions. But reporters and editors make difficult news judgments every day. Like many other issues, they should treat this one on a case by case basis, and foster healthy dialogue rather than follow a rigid, unyielding rule.

MICHELANGELO SIGNORILE
New York, New York

"Provocative...intriguing."
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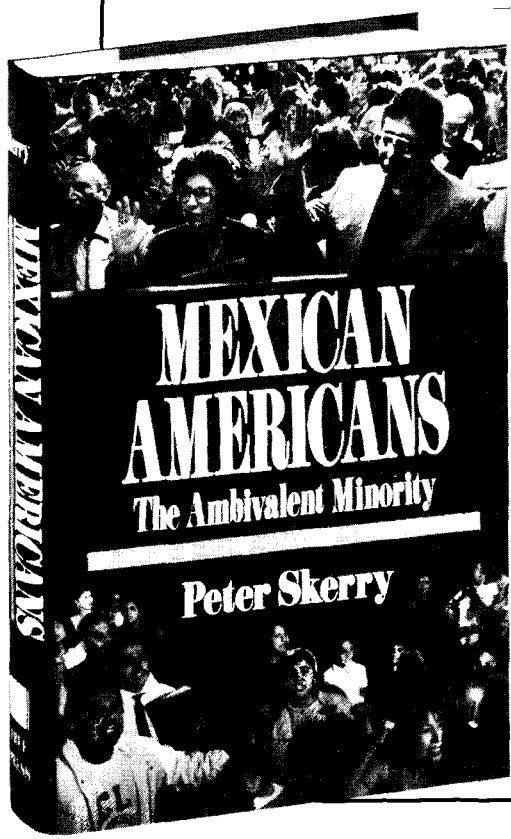

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To the editors:

The open declaration of love for Robin by Batman on your December 20, 1993, cover can only mean one thing in its context: that Bruce Wayne wishes to sodomize his ward, Dick Grayson. Is this funny? Was it intended to sabotage the article by Berman celebrating the growing tolerance of homosexuals? No comic reader ever doubts that Batman loves Robin—though young boys may wonder whether their own fathers love them. The fathers generally do love their sons, uncles love their nephews, teachers love their students, priests love their parishioners. Many of us may wish to avoid thinking of the erotic element in all such relationships, especially our own. That's part of the way in which beneficial social inhibitions operate, which is something your cover can only help to undermine.

MICHAEL J. LYNCH
Toledo, Ohio

Delicate balance

To the editors:

Many aspects of your recent editorial, "The Irish Solution" (December 20, 1993), were troubling. Too much and for too long, analysts and pundits have ignored the pernicious pattern of violence and civil rights violations perpetrated by the British government, and its 17,000 troops, in Northern Ireland. Sadly, the editors of TNR have joined their ranks.

Moreover, Prime Minister John Major's kakistocracy holds power by a slim and precarious margin. The delicate balance, owed to the unionist members of Parliament from Ulster, would be upset should Major move too boldly on the Irish issue. It is farcical to proclaim, therefore, that the British government has no selfish interest in Northern Ireland.

Finally, Western governments have long refused to negotiate with terrorists. It is reasonable and appropriate for Major to continue this policy. It is hypocritical, however, to refuse to negotiate on the basis that a unionist minority will launch a new wave of terrorism. If it is misguided and dangerous for a government to negotiate as a way to avoid terrorism, it is equally misguided and dangerous to refuse to negotiate as a way to avoid terrorism. It may be wrong to reward republican terrorists by entering negotiations. But is equally wrong to reward unionist terrorists by shunning a peaceful solution.

John Major should eschew the advice of TNR and put aside his fear to negotiate. Negotiations have made progress on seemingly intractable imbroglios in

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Africa and the Middle East. There is no reason to suppose that a similar accord cannot be reached in Ireland.

DANIEL O. RITTENHOUSE
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Nutty

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley's TRB "When Is It A Tax?" (December 13, 1993) was nutty. The cases used were comparisons of apples and oranges. As for state-required auto insurance and highway speed limits, those are regulations that the state, as builder and maintainer of roadways, has the right to impose. We seldom see state speed limits on privately owned tracks, and insurance is not mandated for drivers who drive exclusively on their own property. Kinsley correctly asserts that the government has the right to raise grazing fees as rent on its resources. To apply a Marxist term to public lands as well as public roads, the government owns the means of production. Therefore, the government has the same right as a private entity to set fees for the use of its assets.

But when the government does not own the means of production, and clearly it does not in the area of health care, employer mandates cannot be viewed as fees. The increased cost of production in private enterprise in order to further a social goal of the government can only be viewed as a tax.

MICHAEL J. COLLINS
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Square

To the editors:

Anna Husarska's account of the recent mayoral elections in Rome and in Naples was entertaining enough but contains an error regarding the place of Giacomo Matteotti's death ("United Colors," December 27, 1993). She assumes that Matteotti Square, where Alessandra Mussolini's supporters rallied, must have been where the Socialist deputy was killed in 1924. Actually there are many places named after Matteotti in Italy, from streets to squares to avenues, for he was the lone hero who resisted the Fascists in the early years.

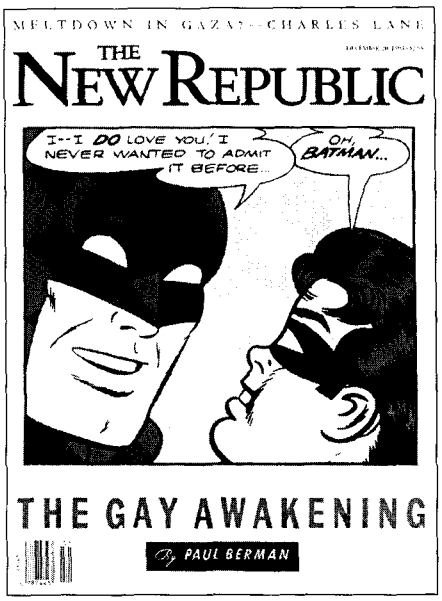
On May 30, 1924, Matteotti, a Socialist member of the Chamber of Deputies, was the only person with enough courage to rise in Parliament and denounce the illegalities, intimidations and violence of the methods used by the Fascists during the election held in April of that year. A few days later, on June 10, Matteotti was abducted in Rome never to be seen alive again. His corpse was found on August 16 in the bushes of the Roman countryside.

FRANCESCO CASTELLANO
Medford, Massachusetts

Demos

To the editors:

In "The People's Choice" (TRB, December 20, 1993), Michael Kinsley writes that populism "has traditionally been associated with notions of direct majority rule, as opposed to the various filters and restraints of constitutional, representative government." He then implies that the "so-called populist" proposals of term limits and the balanced-budget amendment would place "new constraints on democratic decision-making." But this


MELTDOWN IN GAZA!--CHARLES LANE
THE NEW REPUBLIC
I--I DO LOVE YOU. I NEVER WANTED TO ADMIT IT BEFORE...
OH, BATMAN...
THE GAY AWAKENING
By PAUL BERMAN

"democratic decision-making"—i.e., that in the U.S. Congress—is a function of just the sort of "constitutional, representative government" that Kinsley has just claimed populism traditionally opposes.

In any case, term limits and the balanced-budget amendment might arguably move in the direction of "direct majority rule," which Kinsley identifies as a populist goal. Given the assumption that legislators become more and more insulated the longer they stay in office, it can be argued that term limits would scrape away the insulation between legislators and voters. The balanced-budget amendment could be argued to put more budgetary decisions under intense national scrutiny, thus motivating legislators to become more attentive to their districts' opinions on these matters. The priorities that would determine what gets cut and what gets saved might be prone to influence by public opinion to a greater extent than at present.

Kinsley's criticisms of current self-styled populists are justified. But he conveniently neglects the question of how far the *demos* actually has power over the workings of this "democracy." This question also is important.

JASON STUART MALOY
Austin, Texas

Stuck-up sticky beaks

To the editors:

In the December 20, 1993, issue TNR chooses to make light of *Policy Review*'s contention that *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* does not quote conservative voices as much as liberal ones. Here's evidence for the plaintiff: From FDR through Bush, we've had eight terms of Democratic presidents and seven of Republicans (five different presidents from each party). Yet *Bartlett's* gives ninety-four to the Democrats, while the GOP gets just twenty-three. Were the Democrats really four times as quotable?

TNR then ridicules Adam Meyerson's list of 250 suggested quotations—by highlighting and then dismissing a grand total of three. Hardly a representative sample.

Here's some of the words of wisdom that *did* make Editor Justin Kaplan's cut: "What a thrill—my thumb instead of an onion" (Sylvia Plath); "Down on me, down on me, looks like everybody in this whole round world is down on me" (Janis Joplin); "I'd like to welcome the pommy bastard to God's own earth, and I'd like to remind him that we don't like stuck-up sticky-beaks here" (Monty Python's Flying Circus); and, of course, the unforgettable "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" (Noam Chomsky).

JOHN K. HERR
Redondo Beach, California

Po-faced

To the editors:

Andrew Sullivan calls Clintonites "poe-faced," (Washington Diarist, "Voulez-Vous," December 6, 1993). The adult Sullivan may never have used a *pot de chambre*, but as an infant in Britain he no doubt spent some time sitting on a po. Is your embrace of Quayleian orthography permanent?

ROBERT ALLEN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JANUARY 24, 1994

ALL IN THE FAMILY

To begin with the most pertinent fact: the overwhelming majority of couples waiting to adopt a child are white, and about half of the adoptable children in foster care, in every state, are black. Simple math would put some of those black children in white homes. But for twenty years taboos against race-mixing have kept thousands of black children in foster care, even while white couples on waiting lists are willing to adopt them. Sometimes the taboo against transracial adoption is taken to extraordinary extremes: a black child will be pulled out of a white foster home as soon as the couple expresses an interest in adoption, a practice courts have consistently upheld. The results have been grim. A 1993 study by U.C. Berkeley professor Rick Barth shows that a black child in California's foster care system is three times less likely to be adopted than a white child. Future prospects are even grimmer, as the number of children in the nation's foster care system has exploded from 275,000 in 1986 to 500,000 today, making it far more likely that conditions in foster homes will be less than ideal.

It's time to re-evaluate the traditional insistence on racial purity in nongenetic families. The taboo originated not on the racist right, but on the anti-racist left. In 1972 a little-known black nationalist group called the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) gained fame by vilifying the nascent practice of transracial adoption, branding it "cultural genocide." Other black groups protested the statement: twenty members quit NABSW, and the NAACP adopted a resolution supporting the practice. But the intimidation worked on a pool of largely white, liberal social workers. Although the 1968 law permitting transracial adoptions was never changed, in one year the number was cut in half, to 1,569. By 1975, the last year official numbers were kept, it was down to 800. By now the taboo has sunk into the system, and foster care is almost always preferred over transracial adoption. Adoption agencies routinely separate children and prospective parents into white and black lists, and then even light-skinned and dark-skinned lists, invariably to the detriment of the dark-skinned black babies, to say nothing of the disabled dark-skinned baby or troubled black teens.

This seems an obvious cause for liberals, but over the past few years, they have been so busy worrying about adoption's popularity in the pro-life movement and its undoubted psychological strains that they have failed to see what barring transracial adoption is doing to a generation of disadvantaged black children. These are children whose choice is not between a perfect family and an adopted family, but between an adopted family and no family at all. The esoteric critical trend against adoption picked up steam in a September 1992 cover story in *The Atlantic* called "Problem Adoptions," which emphasized the "turmoil and grief" of adoption. Publications as diverse as *Time*, *The New York Times*, *Playboy* and *Mirabella* followed suit, running articles on adoption with titles such as "Ties That Traumatize." Pro-choice pamphlets such as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* are even more explicit, arguing that "the loss of a child to adoption is uniquely unnatural ... a limbo loss."

To stem this tide, last month Senator Howard Metzenbaum introduced the Multiethnic Placement Act, which denies federal financing to any agency that uses race as the only factor in adoptive placements. The bill is well-intentioned, and helpfully restores liberalism's hostility to racial determinism and its commitment to helping the poor and the young, of any race. Unfortunately, as currently written, the bill will do little to change the essential nature of current practices. The watered down version that emerged from the Labor Committee supports transracial adoption only as a possible last resort, which, given the overwhelming bias against it in the adoption system, is tantamount to not supporting it at all. At the insistence of Senators Edward Kennedy and Christopher Dodd, Metzenbaum made

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three seemingly small, but crucial changes. "Agencies may not delay placement of a child" was changed to "*unduly* delay"; "transracial adoption is a preferable alternative to foster care" was changed to "*may* be a preferable alternative;" and a mandate was added forcing agencies first to make efforts to recruit same-race families. These changes amount to nothing more than a list of excuses. To many social workers who oppose transracial adoption, two months, six months, even two years is not an undue delay. And while no one denies the value of recruiting same-race families, asking overburdened social workers to give it first priority, in every case, is asking for long delays.

The bill naively encodes a hierarchy of preferences that has long been a euphemism for opposition to transracial adoption. Even the NABSW's policy statement accepts transracial adoption as a "last resort," after recruitment efforts, although the group says it has not deviated from its 1972 position. Gail Lacider, an aide to Metzenbaum, says the Department of Health and Human Services will set and enforce guidelines for how long an agency may wait. But this again is naive, as HHS has a long-standing policy of ignoring its own rules on transracial adoption. A 1980 law requiring the department to monitor adoptable foster care children every six, twelve and eighteen months is never enforced. And while HHS is currently forbidden to fund agencies that make race the determining factor in abortions, the rule doesn't seem to have much effect. A list of grant recipients turns up Black Homes for Black Children, for whom race is the only factor, and the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAP), which explicitly opposes transracial adoption. Sunday's Child is an HHS-funded directory in *The Boston Globe* of adoptable children with disabilities or psychological problems. The list is taken from the National Register, which forbids cross-race matches for six months. And in September HHS held a joint conference with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, whose Youth Initiative Program is headed by NABSW President Gerald Smith. The only two adoption groups not invited were the National Council on Adoption and the Committee to End Racism in the Child Welfare System, the two most vocal proponents of transracial adoption.

Meanwhile, even seemingly harmless assumptions, such as "it makes sense to give preference to adoptive parents of the same race" in a recent *New York Times* editorial, have been proved inaccurate. Twenty-one of twenty-two studies conducted since the NABSW's pronouncement in 1972 have concluded that minority children who grow up in white families are just as emotionally healthy and comfortable with their racial identities as those in black families, and may even have unique advantages. The most comprehensive study, done by Rita Simon, a law professor at American University, tracked over twenty years 240 white families who adopted black children. In the first phase, Simon gave the children white and black dolls. She found the white dolls were considered no smarter, prettier or nicer by the children. As the children were growing up, most parents were in fact overly sensitive to racial concerns, causing one transracial adoptee to complain that "not every dinner conversation has to be a lesson in black history." In college, many of the children found it an advantage to have inroads into both black and white communities. About half called race an "unimportant factor" in their lives, an attitude the NABSW labeled "inappropriate."

Other studies counter the NABSW's claim that agencies make no efforts to recruit black families. To increase the list of prospective black parents, public agencies recruit from welfare rolls, and accept single parents and people in their 50s and 60s, categories that would automatically be excluded from white lists. A 1986 study found that 50 percent of minority adoptive families had incomes below $20,000, compared with 14 percent for nonminority families and 20 percent had incomes below $10,000, compared with 2 percent in nonminority families. All those at the bottom of the black list are considered before anyone on the white list. A 1991 survey by NACAC, touted in the *Times* editorial, identified institutional barriers that discouraged minorities from adopting. But topping the list were salary and an insistence on two-parent families, not unreasonable requirements. Nor, as the NABSW claims, is white families' willingness to adopt transracially only a thirst for healthy infants. A study by the Packard Foundation in California found white families far more willing than black ones to adopt older and disabled black children. Surveying midwestern states, the study found that 40 percent of transracially adopted children are disabled, 23 percent have psychological problems and 33 percent have been sexually abused. And an internal questionnaire of the Massachusetts foster care system asked white parents on waiting lists whether they would adopt an older or disabled black child, and one-fourth answered yes.

Recently, a group of thirty law professors circulated a petition urging senators to reject the Metzenbaum bill. Led by Harvard Professors Randall Kennedy and Elizabeth Bartholet, an adoptive mother of three Hispanic children, they have drafted a law that would make it illegal to consider race as a factor in adoptions, granting the next available child to the next waiting family. Given the growing institutional resistance to transracial adoptions, the radical clarity this bill would provide is probably the only way to break the transracial taboo. The momentum is now overwhelmingly in the opposite direction. In the past three years, three states—Minnesota, Arizona and California—have passed laws explicitly preferring same-race placement. And for the first time, the NAACP rejected a resolution supporting transracial adoption at its June convention. But short of that, a bill that allows race to be one of many factors should resolutely oppose any delay and support adoption over foster care. There is more than the simple objective of a color-blind society at stake here. There are the lives of many minority children, made palpably less fulfilling by racial ideology. •

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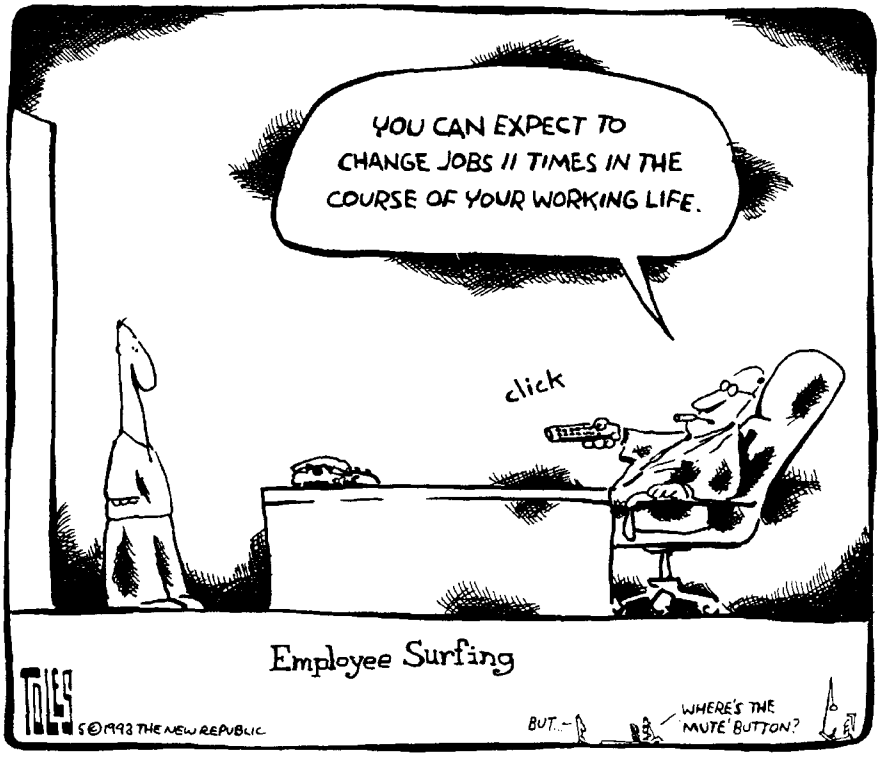
NOTEBOOK

WHITEWATER RAPIDS: There's no easy way to dispel every concern about the Clintons' messy involvement with Whitewater Development Corporation; but the response of the administration is mystifyingly defensive. Why not the fullest public disclosure? Why not the most independent investigation possible? This is not a matter of privacy, as the state troopers' discredited reports were. It's a matter of public interest. In particular, Janet Reno's decision not to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the affair is no longer tenable. "If I appoint a special prosecutor, it's still my prosecutor and there will still be questions about that person's independence," she said on December 24. "If I'm going to be responsible for the outcome of any investigation, then I want to make sure it's done the right way." In the same breath, Reno seemed to take responsibility and to disclaim responsibility for the investigation; and she refused to say whether she supported the decision of her career prosecutors to subpoena the Whitewater files. At this point, only a special prosecutor can dispel the impression that Reno's inquiry is compromisable. And only the renewal of the independent counsel statute (killed by Republicans)—which would allow a special prosecutor to be appointed by judges rather than by the attorney general—can ensure that this tortured dance is not repeated again.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Employee Surfing
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BUT...
WHERE'S THE MUTE BUTTON?

EUROPE CALLING: There's a dangerous new phenomenon in foreign policy these days: the notion that the relative success of neo-fascists in the recent Russian elections should determine our entire approach to the region. (Call it Zhirinovskyism.) To the Poles, Czechs and Hungarians, Zhirinovskyism proves they need NATO membership to protect against a more aggressive Russia. To the Clinton administration, Zhirinovskyism means the opposite, because expanding NATO would lend credibility to the Russian nationalists and their allies in the Russian military. Both are wrong. The Zhirinovskyites have no coherent domestic program and no political strategy. In two months Vladimir Zhirinovsky has shown himself to be a buffoon, and while buffoons do occasionally win power in places like Russia (and elsewhere), his ascension is neither inevitable nor immediate. Meanwhile, there's no tangible sign that Russia has either the means or the desire to threaten Eastern Europe. This is not, *pace* Lech Walesa, 1939. The administration's compromise of a "partnership of peace" with the Eastern nations is therefore right for the wrong reasons. It's right not because Yeltsin should exercise a veto over our foreign policy (he shouldn't); but because it's a pragmatic first step toward enlarging our alliance without imperiling its focus and its effectiveness. A more urgent menace to democracy in Eastern Europe is economic distress. Western Europe's leaders would rather debate NATO than open their protected markets to Eastern European products. Yet speeding up the East's inclusion in the European Union might make a solid short-term contribution to the security and prosperity of those countries. The president should make use of his trip to Europe to drive that point home.

THE INVISIBLE HAND:

Fed Dispels Notion Of Raising Rates Now

—*The Washington Post*, December 8, 1993

Short-Term Rates Will Be Increased, Fed Aide Indicates

—*The Wall Street Journal*, same day

(Thanks to Julie Black, Washington, D.C.)

SORRY, BATMAN: We'd like to apologize to DC Comics for the gratuitous use of its cartoon characters, Batman and Robin, in a context that was clearly inconsistent with the way the characters are portrayed in the company's publications and merchandise. •

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Hamlet on Prozac.

THE HAPPY DANE

By Douglas G. McGrath

(Scene: Elsinore. Enter CLAUDIUS, the King, and GERTRUDE, the Queen.)

KING: Wife, your face is sickled o'er with sadness. Be you still bestooped by the death of your husband, my brother, once the king, who died during his nap when I swear I was in town looking at some oxen?

QUEEN: Beloved brother-in-law and husband, if I am sickled o'er, it is my son Hamlet whom I am sickled o'er o'er. He doth so deeply mope!

KING: Manic-depression, thy name is Hamlet!

QUEEN: In my chamber short seconds ago, he stabbed Polonius through a curtain and Polonius is no more.

KING: You know what this means, my queen?

QUEEN: Indeed, m'lord. We'll need a new curtain.

(GERTRUDE Exits. Enter LAERTES.)

KING: Hail, Laertes, fresh from apothecary class! Have you the unction I asked you should concoct for our Hamlet, so sorely vexed?

LAERTES: Indeed, m'lord. Enmixed in this chalice of mineral water, 'twill make Hamlet ne'er feel major bipolar swings again! Nor with good fortune, any swing at all. 'Tis titled "Prozachery," after my lab partner, Zach Fortinbras who studies to be a golf pro. But hark, here is Hamlet now!

HAMLET: Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw and resolve itself into a dew, or that the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst—how now!

LAERTES: Salutations, Hamlet. Hey, nice doublet. Prithee, have some Poland Spring and so elate thy spirit.

HAMLET: Ha, Laertes, that is a good one! My spirit is as dead as he whom I slipped it to through the curtain. Still, this bubbly froth could hardly hurt it. *(Drinks deeply.)* Now, where was I? Oh, yes—too too solid flesh, blah-dee-blah, blah, blah. That it should come to this: so excellent a king but two months dead, and now his widow serves the funeral meats at her wedding to his brother!... *(Suddenly softening.)* Of course, 'tis a conservation of resources devoutly to be wished! And on deeper thought—and methinks I've ne'er had deeper thoughts than these—I would not want mother to be alone the rest of her life in a country as prone to denial as this one. If marry again she must, how deft that she marry my father's brother, so alike my father in size and beard and last name! *(Drinks again.)* Hey, and speaking of too too solid, Mother and Father's relationship could not have been all that healthy if again so quickly she could rebetroth herself. There's something dysfunctional in the state of Denmark. Methinks the end of my parents' marriage is the result of people who did not own their anger but who let their anger own them. Boy, it's a nice temperature today! *(Drinks again.)* How wondrous this quaff be! Hey, Laertes, man, I thank you for this juice and beg you give me more.

KING: *(Darkly.)* Yes, Laertes, let us to the apothecary table and make new, more *potent* ones.

(They exit as OPHELIA enters.)

HAMLET: This castle wants but a little light ... and maychance some prettily colored throw rugs.

OPHELIA: *(Singing eerily.)* "Father's by the willow, its hoar leaves crying on his eyes ... "

HAMLET: Ophelia, sing thee another song! Dost thou know "Love That Month of May!"? Or sing ye about what fair flowers are there entwined in your hair.

OPHELIA: Soon they will be dead, along with the person in whose aforementioned hair they are entwined.

HAMLET: Life, Ophelia, as now I see it, is all about integration. Do not project your feeling states, but sit with your pain, and in the wake cometh joy. Think not of the sky as spotted with cloud but as *partly sunny*. As 'tis, your grief is riven off from your integrated self and that can only mean you're heading for a shame-spiral which will set your life at no more than a pin's fee.

OPHELIA: He who buys my life by a pin's fee will by that same fee be gouged, if value be his aim.

HAMLET: O.K., O.K., I share your internalized anger. But if my experience may but guide you, take one of these pills every three hours in a cup of wine and flights of angels will follow you about all day long, humming the most enjoyable little tune in your ear. I beg you take this advice to heed: get thee to a pharmacy! Take my arm, I pray you, and let me hie you there. *(Exeunt.)*

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a frequent TNR contributor.

A welfare reform proposal.

TARGET THE KIDS

By Paul Offner

At last, we seem to be moving toward a consensus on welfare reform. Many in Congress, on both sides, strongly support the proposition that the nation's main welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), should be converted into a program emphasizing work. The catch, of course, is that it's expensive. Including day care and the other needed services, it costs at least $5,000 per year to educate or train a welfare mother, not counting the cash payments she receives. Just putting her to work costs

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$4,000 a year for day care, transportation and supervision. And there are 5 million AFDC families. Meanwhile, the federal government is running a massive deficit. Few people favor raising taxes to fund welfare reform, and after repeated efforts at deficit reduction, there are a few easy spending cuts that haven't already been reserved for other purposes—funding health care reform, for instance.

So here's the danger. Congress will pass some great-sounding welfare reform plan, but without adequate funding. The states will not be able to provide the needed training and work slots, and for most recipients nothing will change. In short order, the critics will be saying that the 1994 initiative was a failure, just like earlier ones. And that will undermine any future efforts at real welfare reform.

Half-measures are, after all, the norm with this subject. When the Family Support Act was passed five years ago, for instance, Congress said that adult welfare recipients had to work or participate in job training, and those who didn't would be sanctioned. Unfortunately, however, only about one-sixth of the necessary slots were funded. The law gave priority to volunteers, and in most places that's all there was room for. So those who wanted to sit at home watching television were free to do so. A study conducted by Rockefeller University researchers a year ago found that the Family Support Act was failing to change "the welfare culture." Surprise.

And it's not purely a matter of money. Many critics doubt we could create all the jobs needed to put welfare recipients to work even if the funds were there. According to one estimate, for instance, the Clinton work-after-two-years proposal would require 1.2 million to 1.5 million public service jobs. That's twice the number of jobs funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA), our last effort to create jobs for the unemployed. And that experience provides little room for optimism—CETA was terminated in 1981 amid a flurry of charges that it led to leaf-raking and scandal.

Of course, attitudes have shifted. Twelve years ago, President Ronald Reagan led the fight against CETA out of an instinctive revulsion for public jobs programs. Today, by contrast, 162 Republican House members—all but thirteen—are supporting a bill calling for even more public jobs than the Clinton plan does (it extends the work requirement for welfare mothers to non-custodial fathers of AFDC children). Whether these members of Congress would continue to support, *and fund*, a large national public jobs program if it started attracting the kinds of criticism that were leveled at CETA twelve years ago remains to be seen, of course. Most of the forty welfare experts convened by Douglas Besharov at the American Enterprise Institute three weeks ago doubted the feasibility of such a large public jobs initiative.

In a few places around the country, there have been welfare reform demonstration projects that have achieved the goal of universal participation. It has made all the difference. In Ohio, for instance, the state started the Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program in 1989, requiring teenage AFDC mothers to stay in school. Since there are only 20,000 of these teen welfare mothers, the state could afford to provide all of them with necessary support services. So the element of uncertainty is eliminated—if you're a teen parent on AFDC in Ohio, you're in LEAP. If you don't attend school, your grant is reduced. If you show up regularly, you receive a bonus. A recent evaluation by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation found significant increases in school enrollment. Similarly, MDRC's evaluation of the GAIN program in Riverside, California, shows relatively large earnings increases and welfare savings in a work program in which the participation requirement applies to everyone.

So here's the quandary. Welfare reform is not likely to succeed unless all members of the target group are required to participate. Unfortunately, that's expensive, and at the present time we're short on money. And even if we had the money, it's not clear we know how to create all the needed jobs. So what do we do?

One possibility is to phase in the new program. Thus, both the Clintonites and the House Republicans would limit the reform program to welfare *applicants*, i.e., to those coming onto the rolls. Sadly, this doesn't help much because welfare recipients are constantly moving on and off the rolls. Suppose the program starts in October 1994 (as in the Republican House bill), and is limited to those applying after that time. Even if we exempt those who cannot work or who have very young children, there would be 1 million eligibles in 1995, 2.3 million in 1996 and 2.7 million in 1997. At $4,000 to $5,000 per person, the costs add up quickly.

Or the program could be phased in by area. Congress could limit the new program to five to ten states with the understanding that other states would be brought in as funds become available. The only problem is that it would be hard for Clinton to claim that he had changed welfare as we know it when he runs for re-election in 1996. In addition, the average member of Congress is not likely to support this approach unless his state is in the group guaranteed funding at the outset. So there would be great pressure to add states as quickly as possible, and in no time at all the demand for resources would exceed the supply.

The only way to solve this problem is for Congress and the president to agree to target their efforts. Maybe five years from now the budget picture will have improved, and a broader reform initiative can be put in place. But for now let's do something that is consistent with available resources.

For instance, Congress could target teenage parents on AFDC. This is where, after all, the whole cycle of welfare dependency begins. Here's a possible reform package: teenage mothers would have to live with their families to receive AFDC (they could not move out and get their own apartments), and they would have to stay in school until graduation or until they reached the age of

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20. Those who didn't would lose part of their AFDC checks. After receiving their degrees, or reaching 20, they would be offered work, but not welfare. Finally, teen parents would go to the front of the queue for the purposes of determining paternity and obtaining child support orders.

Since there are only about 400,000 teen AFDC mothers, the cost of these changes would be modest (about $500 million a year). But it would be a sound investment. Teenage girls contemplating motherhood and welfare would know that they would have to live at home, stay in school and go to work after graduation. And it would be a sure thing.

What would prevent young women from waiting until they are 20 to get pregnant and go on welfare? Nothing. But even this would be an improvement. For one thing, women of 20 are much more likely to have graduated from high school. It is the teen mothers who are most at risk of being permanently trapped in poverty. And by concentrating our efforts on this one group, we maximize our chances of reducing long-term welfare dependency.

The particulars of such a plan can be debated, of course (if the funds are available, it might make sense to target mothers up to age 25, for instance). But what matters is that there be a plan, and that it be realistic. While there is great enthusiasm in Congress for carrying out comprehensive reforms right away, we would be better off passing something more limited that has a real chance of working. There have already been too many failures in the war against poverty. Showing taxpayers that real improvements are possible is the most important contribution any of us could make to the long-term cause of rescuing the underclass.

PAUL OFFNER is a legislative aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The views expressed here are his own.

STEPANAKERT POSTCARD

BURNED-OUT

By Anna Husarska

"Should I snore, please don't hesitate to wake me up," shouted Lady Caroline Cox, of the British House of Lords, as we bedded down for the night inside the Russian cargo plane carrying us from Switzerland to Armenia. Not to worry. The engine noise inside the cavernous hull drowned out all other sounds. We stretched out on top of boxes of powdered baby formula—and awoke six hours later in the freezing dawn at the airport in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia.

The powdered milk was part of the nearly thirty tons of aid (food, medicine and clothes) that Lady Cox and Christian Solidarity International, a Swiss charity organization, were delivering to the people of Armenia and especially of Nagorno-Karabakh. It was the ninth such charter-flight.

Although it declared independence in 1991 and has its own Parliament and flag and national anthem, and even a border crossing station, Nagorno-Karabakh has not been recognized by any country—not even by Armenia, to which it would ultimately like to be attached. And there is little reason to believe that the five-year-old bloody conflict between the Armenians, Azeris and Karabakhs, which has cost an estimated 15,000 lives, is coming to an end. This ethnic conflict was probably unavoidable: Josef Stalin declared in 1923 that this small territory—approximately the size of Delaware—was to be an enclave inside the Azeri Socialist Soviet Republic, even though two-thirds of its 200,000 inhabitants were Armenian (Christians) and one-third were Azeris (Turkish by culture, Muslim by religion).

So there it was, separated from the Armenian motherland by a corridor four miles wide at its narrowest, but ruled from the Azeri capital of Baku. According to Zori Balayan, one of the leaders of the Karabakh independence movement, during Soviet times children here had no books in Armenian; people in Nagorno-Karabakh could not listen to Armenian radio or T.V. and were subject to a mixture of Russification and Azerization. Not surprisingly, the Armenians—whose appearance in Asia Minor, according to the Greek historian Herodotus, dates back to the twelfth century B.C.—were not happy with this arrangement.

In the end of 1987, encouraged by perestroika, the Armenians started raising their voices: deputies from Karabakh demanded that their district be attached to Armenia proper. At the end of February 1988 1 million people were in the streets of Yerevan. The next day, in the Azeri towns of Sumgait and Baku, groups of Azeris carried out pogroms against Armenians living there: hundreds died, thousands were injured and some 150,000 escaped to Armenia. A double exodus followed: Azeris fled from Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, and Armenians from the neighboring former capital of Shusha, where Azeris were predominant. The hostility turned into a civil war, fueled by the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. When the Russian troops withdrew from the region, Azeris and Karabakhs started facing each other directly—using military hardware left by the Red Army.

In May 1992 the Karabakh forces took Shusha and then the border town of Lachin, thus hooking up Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia through a corridor several miles wide. The next year they recaptured almost all of Nagorno-Karabakh and then doubled the territory under their control by invading Azerbaijan proper. As of

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today the breach between the two Armenian lands is firmly in Karabakh hands, as are the northeastern town of Agdam, captured last July, and the territories south of the Karabakh border, which were taken in October.

Thousands of Azeris had to flee from these lands, raising to 1 million the estimated number of displaced people on both sides. Now the only Azeris one meets in Nagorno-Karabakh are a few dozen women and children, hostages kept at the children's hospital and in the kindergarten in Stepanakert. They live in awful conditions, squeezed into small hospital rooms, dressed in several layers of clothing and wrapped in blankets to protect themselves from the freezing temperatures, even indoors. (The local people in Nagorno-Karabakh don't live any better: when the authorities in Stepanakert gave a dinner in honor of Lady Cox, it was served by torchlight and we kept our coats on.)

It was in Shusha, the town that was once Armenian, then Azeri, now Armenian again, that I met Ludmilla Chakopian, a pudgy, 37-year-old Armenian woman, who was a victim of the pogrom in Sumgait. She, her husband and three children fled from Azerbaijan through Russia and Armenia, leaving behind all their possessions. After Shusha was recaptured by Karabakh forces, Ludmilla moved in. She is pretty well-settled, with nice furniture, a fancy stereo and an administrative job helping other refugees. There are 3,350 Armenians living in Shusha (population before the war: 18,000). Most, like Ludmilla, are refugees from Azerbaijan.

It is easy to locate the refugees: just follow the kids carrying buckets of water, or spot the clothes hanging on lines in heavy fog or the black smoke billowing from homemade stoves. And more are on the way; already many houses have the word *zanyato* (Russian for "taken") painted on their doors. But the repopulation of Shusha is an exception. All the towns the Armenians took from Azerbaijan have been looted, which suggests that they will remain empty.

Agdam, for example, from where bomb attacks on Stepanakert were once launched, is now a ghost town; the only sound you can hear there is the chopping of trees: the wood is hauled back to Stepanakert and burned for heat. Aside from the tree-cutters with their primitive axes and rare visitors who come to pick the persimmons and grenadines in the abandoned orchards, no one ventures here. I visited a few houses in Agdam: all were obviously plundered, some burned. In the patio of something that must have been a restaurant I found a few broken stoves, but all things wooden, including the floorboards, had been ripped out.

Although the sight recalls the ethnically cleansed towns and villages of Bosnia, the parallel is not precise, because the Armenians did not repopulate the zones that they have captured; and according to Robert Kocharian, the president of the state defense committee in Stepanakert, there are no plans to do so. The example of former Yugoslavia taught the Armenians that it would be useless to wait for the United Nations to send its Blue Helmets. So, risking international condemnation (which came in a U.N. Security Council resolution) the Karabakh fighters grabbed those territories as buffer zones.

The Armenian minister of defense, Serge Sarkisyan, whom I saw in Yerevan, expected a counterattack by the Azeris; but he was certain that Nagorno-Karabakh would not return under Azeri rule, if only because this region was an enclave of the Azerbaijani Socialist Soviet Republic, as defined in the constitution of the late USSR. "If the USSR were to be revived, many other questions may arise ..." he smiled maliciously.

The Azeri counteroffensive that Sarkisyan announced came on December 18, one day after a Moscow-mediated truce. (Russia obviously fared better as empire than as umpire.) At the end of December Azeri and Armenian parliamentarians gathered in Finland (the result was nil). A few days later the presidents of the two countries met in Turkmenistan, but the fighting continued. Finally, on January 1, the Armenian foreign minister asked his Iranian counterpart to mediate in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. An improbable mediator? Perhaps, but neither the U.N. nor the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is ready to send any peacemaking or observation mission to the region; besides, compared with the fire-breathing rhetoric of the now-ubiquitous Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the thought of an Iranian-brokered peace doesn't seem all that ridiculous. Recently, Zhirinovsky bluntly laid out his plans for Nagorno-Karabakh: "We could get rid of the Trans-Caucasus. It is just an abscess. It's no use to us. It is just a source of crime, corruption and disintegration." •

From Baghdad to Pyongyang.

GOING BALLISTIC

By Kenneth R. Timmerman

On December 29 U.S. and North Korean negotiators reached a compromise: in exchange for partial United Nations inspections of most of North Korea's declared nuclear sites, the United States would cancel its 1994 Team Spirit military exercises with South Korea. The fate of two suspected nuclear waste sites—the biggest sticking point in the talks—was left unresolved. North Korea's news agency called the deal a breakthrough, which should be reason enough to view the pact with suspicion.

What has been accomplished in the nine months since North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons? The country has used the downtime, unimpeded by inspections, to pursue its clandestine nuclear weapons

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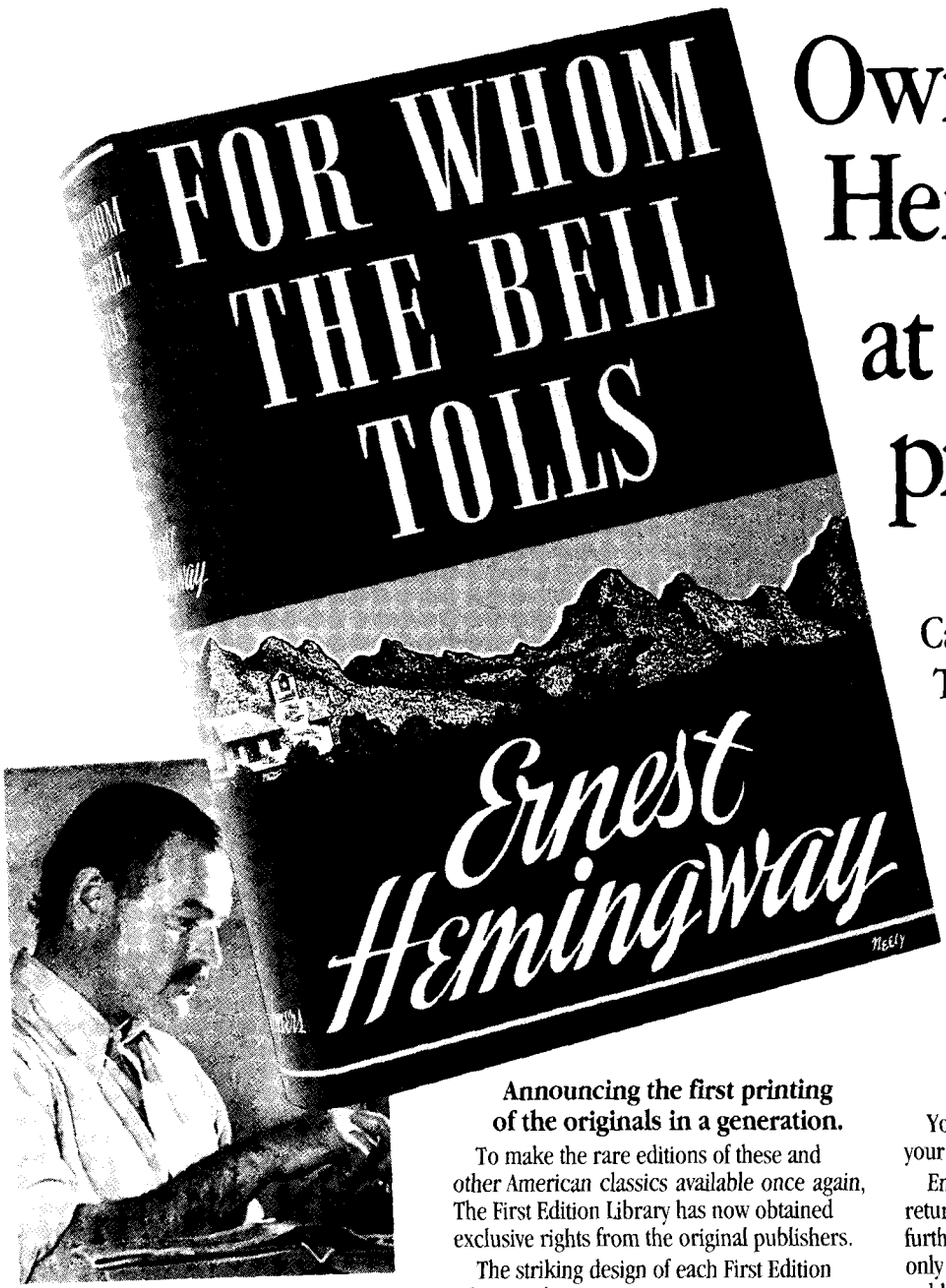

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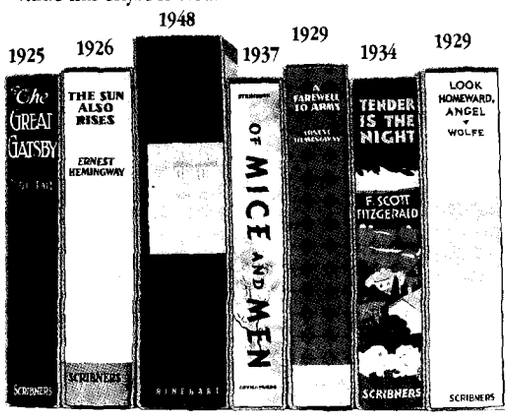

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program. The U.S. intelligence community now believes the North Koreans actually have a bomb—perhaps as many as four.

Defense Secretary Les Aspin let the cat out of the bag on the December 12 "Meet the Press." Although he couched the revelation about the North Korean bomb in the conditional ("might possess a single nuclear device"), he may as well have said the obvious: the Clinton administration must now deal with a nuclear North Korea. Only three days earlier, during a strategy session at the White House, President Clinton was told by CIA Director James Woolsey that in addition to the bomb, the North Koreans possess a ballistic missile capable of reaching Japan. Woolsey also told the president that the intelligence community could not locate with confidence all North Korea's nuclear weapons facilities, since many had been built deep underground. From his newly appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. John Shalikashvili, Clinton learned that the military had no means to attack deeply buried targets, dashing hopes for a quick and bloodless airstrike. Instead, he heard the Pentagon's contingency plans for reinforcing the 36,000 American troops now facing the more than 700,000 North Koreans along the DMZ. Pentagon insiders say that to defeat the North Korean nuclear threat the military has developed a scenario that calls for moving as many as 500,000 troops, several thousand tanks and armored vehicles and hundreds of warplanes to South Korea. Clinton's mood after the session was described as somber.

Since March 12, when North Korea announced its pullout from the NPT, the entire U.S. effort has been aimed at building an international consensus to roll back the North Korean nuclear program. In a marked contrast with President Bush's personal diplomacy in building the Gulf war coalition, however, Clinton has left the coalition-building to his State Department negotiators instead of leading the efforts himself.

Led by the assistant secretary for politico-military affairs, Robert L. Gallucci, and by Gary Samore, a deputy for nuclear nonproliferation, the State Department argued that the North Koreans wanted to be talked out of their rash act, and were using their nuclear program as a bargaining chip to obtain economic and political concessions from the West. The intelligence estimates of North Korea's nuclear program were "inconclusive," they argued. Therefore, every chance should be given to come to a negotiated solution.

But North Korea's nuclear intentions were not entirely opaque. In early 1989, according to the intelligence estimate Aspin referred to, North Korea shut down a 25 megawatt reactor at its Yongbyon nuclear center and unloaded part of its core for reprocessing into weapons-grade fuel. In June of that year, U.S. nuclear experts concluded that North Korea was building new facilities at Yongbyon, including a laboratory capable of separating 6 kilograms of plutonium from spent reactor fuel annually—enough for a bomb a year.

Rather than raise the public temperature on North Korea as the Iraq crisis was heating up, however, the State Department argued that quiet diplomatic pressure should be intensified to convince the country to conclude an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency that would force it to open its facilities to international inspections. That agreement was finally signed on January 30, 1992.

"When the safeguards agreement was signed, we were all congratulating ourselves," said an official involved in the negotiations. But the self-congratulation was premature. Since then, North Korea has established an impressive record of lying about its nuclear programs.

Starting in May 1992, North Korea allowed the IAEA to conduct six inspections of its nuclear facilities, including a laboratory where it acknowledged it had reprocessed gram quantities of plutonium from the damaged fuel rods removed in 1989. What the North Koreans hadn't bargained for was skepticism from the IAEA. After taking samples of reprocessed plutonium and waste materials used in reprocessing in late 1992, the sixth IAEA team returned to North Korea on January 26 to confront the North Koreans with the test results. According to a senior member of the IAEA board, it had shipped the samples to the United States, where they were tested for their isotopic content. If the North Koreans had reprocessed only a single batch of plutonium, as they claimed, then the isotopic content of all the samples should have been the same. Instead, varying traces of americium and other radioactive isotopes showed that the waste samples came from three separate reprocessing runs, in 1989, 1990 and 1992. It amounted to a smoking gun.

By the time the North Koreans formally announced their intention to withdraw from the NPT on March 12, it was clear their intention all along had been to dupe the IAEA into giving them a clean bill of nuclear health, while keeping their weapons program intact. Nevertheless, the State Department refused to precipitate the crisis, arguing instead at interagency meetings that there was still time to negotiate. "Besides," one participant in these sessions said, "what was the alternative? If we took the case to the Security Council, we might have gotten a resolution calling for sanctions. But it would have been ineffective because the Chinese were not going to support it. And there was always the risk the North Koreans might react violently."

In April Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff got into the act by offering to begin high-level talks between the United States and North Korea. Part of Tarnoff's offer was a secret pledge that the United States would not press the Security Council—to which the IAEA had referred the case—to impose sanctions. On June 2 Gallucci met in New York with Kang Sok Chu, North Korea's first vice minister of foreign affairs. It was the first meeting of its kind between officials of the two countries. Instead of berating the North Koreans, Gallucci offered to keep a channel open between Pyongyang and Washington for as long as the IAEA was confident that the "continuity of safeguards" was unbro-

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ken. A second condition was that North Korea agree to IAEA inspections. At a subsequent meeting in Geneva, Gallucci offered to allow North Korea to purchase light water nuclear reactors in exchange for abandoning its plutonium production reactors. Both moves were criticized by U.S. officials as rewarding North Korea for its cheating. For the North Koreans, the efforts exposed a lack of resolve. Clinton attempted to redress the balance during his July trip to the DMZ, when he admonished the North Koreans that any attack on South Korea would mean "the end of their country as they know it."

While the State Department was stumbling toward an impasse, Pentagon officials were trying to convince Assistant Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, head of DOD's counterproliferation efforts, to join the battle. An August 10 internal memo to Carter charged that since 1989 there had been a "critical upsurge" of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, both of which were projected to become fully operational by 1995. By that time, North Korea would have on-line a new 300 megawatt plutonium production reactor, capable of making enough weapons-grade material for as many as ten bombs a year. The danger was compounded by North Korea's deal with Iran to trade missile technology for oil. The paper warned there was "no risk-free decision," since a nuclear North Korea would force Japan to go nuclear, and recommended that the United States take the case to the Security Council for a total trade embargo on North Korea. A Carter aide, Steven Fetter, rejected the paper's conclusions, arguing that nothing should jeopardize the negotiations. Carter and his deputy, Mitchel Wallerstein, fought against sanctions in interagency meetings on the grounds that the intelligence was "shaky, at best."

Still, things did begin to change—a bit. On November 2 in Tokyo, Aspin asked Japan to cut off the estimated $700 million in remittances sent home by North Korean workers there. (Japan reluctantly agreed.) It was a first, informal move toward isolating North Korea. By late December, even the State Department negotiators agreed that time was running out: North Korea must shut down its Yongbyon reactor within the next few weeks.

Why has the Clinton administration been so slow to escalate the crisis? For one thing, it took the intelligence community some time—perhaps two years, when key defectors became available—to assess North Korea's nuclear intentions. For another, as one senior White House aide put it, "We feel a responsibility to exhaust all other possibilities before a confrontation with the international equivalent of David Koresh." But beneath the administration's hesitancy was a feeling that the issue had already come to a boiling point during the Bush administration, and nothing had been done about it.

The flawed December 29 pact doesn't mark the end of the North Korean crisis. State Department negotiators hope—perhaps unrealistically—that at least it will prevent a war.

KENNETH R. TIMMERMAN is author of *The Death Lobby: How the West Armed Iraq* (Houghton Mifflin).

The pedigree of Edouard Balladur.

MR. FRENCH

By Kenneth Weinstein

Edouard Balladur, the descendent of a long line of French merchants influential in the Ottoman Empire, is not especially bold. Friends who frequent his richly appointed Sixteenth Arrondisement townhouse, with its paintings by Braque, Kandinsky and Soulages, confess that Balladur's idea of cutting loose is to drink champagne on the rocks. But this level-headed man in his somber three-button suit has, in the middle of a deep recession, skyrocketed onto the political scene in France as the most popular prime minister of the last quarter-century. He's now the front-runner to succeed François Mitterrand as president of the Fifth Republic by perfecting a technique that may become emblematic of fin-de-siècle Western Europe: the politics of nostalgia.

In office since last April, Balladur, 63, has presided over an economy in collapse. Industrial output has shrunk; the franc has fallen; unemployment, at 12 percent, is still climbing. Yet, despite this and many policy reversals—including a retreat from a focus on budget austerity, backing off a plan to downsize Air France and dropping a bill to limit student housing subsidies—Balladur's popularity hovers in the mid-60 percent range. Part of this can be attributed to the welcome change he offers from the incompetence of the Socialists, who fell from office in last March's legislative elections. But it's also due to something else: in the face of easy, modern cynicism, Balladur has gained the trust of the French who see him as a throwback to the fondly remembered era of disinterested public service, strong families and iron-clad faith. He has assumed the Orleanist father-figure role unfilled since the death of his mentor, President Georges Pompidou. In 1987, while serving as finance minister, Balladur had to be dissuaded from genuflecting upon the pope's arrival at Lyons Airport.

Balladur honed his political skills in the mid-1960s by handling industrial relations for then-Prime Minister Pompidou. During the May 1968 Paris unrest, Balladur kept his sangfroid while other officials flinched. He contributed to the Grenelle accords, which defused labor unrest by ensuring pay raises and reducing the work week. Bargaining in good faith with union leaders, he exhibited the trademarks of his current domestic success: a preference for "dialogue among social partners" over confrontation and a pathological willingness to compromise.

When Pompidou became president in 1969, Balladur

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became deputy secretary general of Elysée Palace, rising to secretary general in 1973. As Pompidou's health worsened, Balladur eventually came to run the Elysée in the dark days prior to and following Pompidou's death. In 1983 Balladur became the first to argue for "cohabitation," the power-sharing arrangement in which a prime minister of one party and a president of another hold office simultaneously. As ranking minister in Jacques Chirac's 1986-1988 government, he was to observe firsthand how that worked in practice. Mitterrand skillfully exploited economic stress, student riots and a transportation strike to undermine Chirac and defeat him in the 1988 presidential election.

As the 1993 legislative elections approached, Balladur was the only real person "*premier ministrable.*" In addition to being a member of Chirac's inner circle, Balladur was acceptable to both Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's pro-European, center-right Union for the French Democracy (UDF) and the Euroskeptical elements of Chirac's Rally for the Republic (RPR). Balladur led RPR forces appealing for ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, but did so only while noting that a right-wing government would be responsible for enforcing the treaty. In office, he turned these skills to good effect. Even on the most divisive issue, the *franc fort* policy that tied France to high German interest rates, Balladur adroitly widened the European Rate Mechanism tunnel, effectively devaluing the franc while maintaining the ERM structure. This tactic kept further speculation at bay and reinforced the franc's market position. It also kept both conservative factions relatively happy.

Balladur, moreover, learned from Chirac's experience not to allow President Mitterrand and the left to capitalize on social discontent. He first attacked the $74 billion budget deficit, a result of high unemployment and rising social security costs. An austerity program, which pleased deficit-weary centrists, cut government spending and hiked taxes on tobacco, alcohol and the sources that finance social welfare benefits. He then announced the sale of twenty-one nationalized state industries, banks and insurance companies. Unlike Chirac's privatization, these sales were not inspired by ideology but by a need to bring money, approximately $95 billion, into government coffers. At the same time he deflated the economy, Balladur also bought off social unrest. In late May, as pressure grew to take concrete steps to improve soaring unemployment, Balladur launched sales of a bond to finance job creation and help out cash-strapped state industries. A compromise between further austerity and new expenses to stimulate economic growth and employment, the "Balladur bond" was a tremendous success, selling almost three times its original target of $7.3 billion.

He also gave in to organized labor in strategic fashion. Despite Air France losses totaling almost $1 billion a year, he scrapped a plan to phase out 4,000 positions at the airline when a two-week strike threatened to escalate. To appease farmers before heading into the final round of GATT talks, Balladur offered them an additional $275 million in subsidies.

While moving to the left on "social" issues, Balladur has moved to the right elsewhere. He has let Interior Minister Charles Pasqua run amok. Pasqua, the hardline interior minister in Chirac's 1986-1988 government and leader in the fight against Maastricht, appeals to voters of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front. On immigration, Balladur has largely let Pasqua have his way. Under Pasqua's guidance, the government has tightened immigration and naturalization laws. The constitution has been amended so that asylum is now a prerogative of the state, not an individual right. This change enables France to deny entry to asylum-seekers refused entry elsewhere in the European Union. Moreover, while resident foreigners born in France used to automatically become citizens unless they expressed their desire not to do so, they must now declare allegiance to the republic to obtain citizenship. Even more significant have been Pasqua's measures to battle illegal immigration—including allowing mayors to nullify fraudulent marriages undertaken for immigration purposes—which have raised fears among France's half-million illegal immigrants.

Balladur also chose firmness in the GATT negotiations, while understanding and admitting that the agreement in many ways was a "trap": whereas opposing an agreement would have brought international isolation, giving in to international pressures for an unmodified GATT would have created a domestic crisis. Going into the GATT negotiations, Balladur needed to secure concessions while at the same time ensuring that an agreement was reached. He managed to get the United States to agree that the E.U. can reduce export subsidies more slowly, though still within the next six-year period. Moreover, Balladur has received assurances that the E.U. will indemnify farmers for land that will lay fallow as a result of GATT.

For the moment, Balladur has refused to talk presidential politics, saying he needs to stay focused on the economic crisis. And in fact, the recession remains his gravest threat. The government's own estimates show that unemployment will rise again next year, perhaps by as much as 240,000. And Balladur has not yet shown the courage to take all the difficult measures necessary to restore French competitiveness. But even if the slump intensifies, the polls suggest French voters are highly unlikely to return to Balladur's competitors on the discredited left: former Prime Minister Michel Rocard or Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission. In the last resort, the major reason many moderate French voters have placed their hopes on Balladur is because if his politics fails, there may be no alternative to a descent into something far worse. Pasqua—and what he stands for—is waiting in the wings. And nostalgia is for now a more palatable option than reaction.

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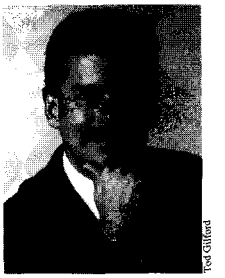
Ted Gifford

Dr. Robert Greenberg is Chair of the Department of Music History and Literature and Director of the Adult Extension Division of the San Francisco Conservatory. He is the recipient of numerous composition awards, including three Nicola de Lorenzo prizes. He is creator and lecturer of the San Francisco Symphony Discovery Series.

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A short history of Mr. Magaziner.

DIES IRA

By Jacob Weisberg

Nothing adorns the walls of Ira Magaziner's office. There are, in fact, no objects of aesthetic contemplation—just some pieces of government-issue, faux-colonial furniture and bookshelves overflowing with bound studies, reports and three-ring notebooks. The twenty or so red and blue binders, which have labels such as "Tollgate II" and "Tollgate IV" scribbled on their spines in black magic marker, contain the product of Magaziner's health care task force, probably the most ambitious policy study in the history of the federal government. Five hundred experts met in almost continuous secret session for the first five months of 1993. They gathered in "clusters" and "working groups," sometimes until 2 a.m. on Sunday mornings. They subjected each other to papers, presentations and slide shows. Finally, their work was offered up for criticism by "contrarians" and "auditors."

To Magaziner, who devised this elephantine process, the notebooks comprise a kind of Talmud of health care reform. "Those books on the shelf up there are going to serve us very well as we go through the congressional process," he says with a prideful glance. "We've looked at so many different options and analyzed so many different scenarios and so on that as problems are found and people are trying to find different solutions, we're going to have backups. If you don't like this one, there's this one that we rejected." The books detail what Magaziner says are some 800 "movable parts" in the Clinton plan, and explain how each element can be adjusted without compromising the integrity of the whole. If, for instance, the president wants to concede to his adversaries on insurance premium caps, all he has to do is turn to the notebooks that contain the reports of the "Budget and Caps" working group (part of the "New System Organization" cluster). They delineate the rejected options: no global budget, fixed fee schedules or something called a "feebate," which involves a tax on high-cost health plans and a rebate on low-cost ones.

The binders are the finest flowering of Magaziner's methodological passion. That passion, depending on one's perspective, is either an expression of genius or of folly. Talk to Magaziner for a few hours—he'll want to talk more—and you cannot help but be overwhelmed by his casual mastery. He has studied health care with a manic ardor—fifteen hours a day, seven days a week for twelve months—and he understands it as well as many people who have spent their entire careers on the subject. With his drab, unkempt zealotry, ascetic diligence and barely audible mutter, Magaziner seems to aspire to the status of a policy monk. "On a scale of one to ten, his affect level is about a minus two," says Ted Marmor, a professor at the Yale School of Organization and Management who has advised Bill Clinton on health care.

This inverted charisma is strangely compelling. When you whisper, people have to listen closely. The stories of Magaziner's tireless globe-trotting on behalf of corporate America, in which he survives on iron rations of spaghetti, Cokes and Mallomars, or of the fancy dinner parties during which he wanders into the kitchen to find a bag of pretzels, underscore the appealing side of his Naderite persona. Here is a pure, unmaterialistic man—despite his millions—who is determined to bring rigor and integrity to the seamy world of politics. On the other hand, there is a sneaking hubris to what he is doing that is just as striking—and faintly unsettling. One man sets up a system to anticipate every objection to and possible problem in transforming a trillion-dollar sector of the American economy. He speaks in management jargon and fetishizes a process that looks to most people like chaos. Magaziner's guiding idea is that rational planning can solve any problem, social, economic or spiritual. His universe is one in which the uncertainty principle and the law of unintended consequences do not exist; his career is testimony to the belief that for every problem there exists a total solution. With skeptical eyes, Magaziner's binders start to look like the policy version of Borges's infinite library.

This view of government is not that of the Clinton administration as a whole. Despite the president's noted fondness for a jolly policy seminar, the other major initiatives of his first year were developed in more modest fashion. Clinton's budget was not the product of an economic Manhattan Project; nor was his national service plan. Thirty-two people are working out welfare reform—not 500. The difference is Ira Magaziner. As Magaziner's career has evolved, his approach to problem solving has remained an intense constant; and, despite the best intentions, his efforts at total solutions have constituted a chain of partial disasters.

Magaziner is one of those people whose character

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appears to have been fully formed by adolescence. Early photos show him looking more like the young Bob Dylan than Big Bird, but in them he burns with the same disheveled fervor, the same intense, otherworldly focus as now. As a lower-middle-class Jewish teenager in Long Island (his father was a bookkeeper in a tomato-packing house), he organized a strike at a summer camp and a boycott of a student organization because of segregation. But his first characteristic project was overhauling the curriculum of Brown University. In this, we see the hallmarks of Magaziner's later work: the committees, the massive research, the big report and the strenuous effort to convince others of his conclusions. What's unique about the Brown study is that he succeeded in lobbying his plan through largely intact, and that twenty-five years later you can assess the results.

Like many members of the Clinton generation, Magaziner began his career as a 1960s radical. But like Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, who pursued similar curricular reforms at Dartmouth, Magaziner was a nerd among revolutionaries. His idea for a fun way to spend summer vacation after his sophomore year in 1967 was to review Brown's curriculum and develop proposals for improving it. He read John Dewey, Ortega y Gasset and Alfred North Whitehead. He buried himself in the university archives, examining records of previous reform efforts. He then wrote, with Elliot Maxwell, a fellow student, a 400-page essay titled "Draft of a Working Paper for Education at Brown University." Section Three is modestly titled "Brief History of the American University." "First, there is great difficulty in defining what is meant by knowledge," Magaziner writes at one point. "We have discovered no universal formula for the development of the intellect," he acknowledges at another.

Despite its naïveté, the report is a thoughtful study of curricular issues—and a stunning work for a 19-year-old. Its conclusions, though not especially radical in the context of 1968, were in sync with the times, even a few decades ahead. Studying the great works of Western Civilization meant the transmission of "a particular culture," and was, as the phrase went, not relevant. The idea of general education requirements "suffers from a lack of vitality and meaningfulness." The report pushed for ending distribution requirements, freshman English and the foreign language requirement. Exams should be take-home, not be due for a month and be given only when "educationally valuable." Magaziner also argued for reducing the course load and eliminating grades. ("How can the development of internal values take place under the highly pressured system which accents motivation by artificial external incentives?" the paper deftly asked.)

Magaziner then went to work selling his ideas. A faculty committee given the report in his junior year did little with it; Magaziner drummed up student pressure and won the appointment of a more serious committee the next year, which included student members, himself among them, for the first time. That committee's recommendations were adopted by the Brown faculty in 1969. In the end, what came out was "pretty close" to what he recommended, Magaziner says. Brown dropped its required courses, cut the number of credits needed for graduation from thirty-two to twenty-eight and eliminated "D"s and "F"s.

The so-called New Curriculum turned Brown into what Magaziner's friend Derek Shearer calls "one of the hottest schools in the country." Magaziner remains a campus cult figure to this day, and students have fought pitched battles to preserve what he wrought. But the school has also become notorious for its abdication on the question of what liberal education means. Brown does not require even a glancing encounter with the great books or ideas of Western Civilization. Its students can go straight into film studies or semiotics without stopping to read Plato or Shakespeare, gaining the basics of physics or learning to write in English. For those who want to party and get good grades while choosing chic-sounding courses from a cafeterialike menu, there's no more congenial place in academe. The 1994 *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, which are assembled by polling presidents, deans and admissions directors, put Brown's academic reputation at the bottom of the Ivy League.

After leading a graduation-day protest against Henry Kissinger, who was receiving an honorary degree, Magaziner went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. There he pursued his own laissez-faire ideas about education: he read according to his own plan in economics and sociology, and showed up for lectures at Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics. He also met Bill Clinton. The two shared an interest in civil rights, and in opposing the Vietnam War. Magaziner spent much of his time in London organizing protests; his involvement was heavier and more radical than Clinton's, and it included a friendship with Vanessa Redgrave. The difference between Magaziner and Clinton, says classmate James Fallows, was "the difference between somebody who planned to run for office and somebody who didn't."

When he returned home in 1971, Magaziner organized a group of Brown and Oxford classmates to take up residence in the small, working-class town of Brockton, Massachusetts. Magaziner found Brockton through an Oxford classmate whose parents lived there. He wanted to transform a small city into a model of social democracy; Brockton was to be a case study. As at Brown, he began with a six-month study of the town's power structure, sifting through deeds and documents. "We did a very thorough analysis of what was going on, who was benefiting and so forth. We also researched a whole series of corrupt deals which had gone on for years," he remembers. In this case, though, there was no written report—just a weekly paper called the *Brockton Examiner*. The project was a unique example of Magaziner pursuing a social change agenda from the outside. He and fellow participants never introduced themselves to the mayor. Instead, they launched a renters' assistance program, a food co-op and a labor support group. They rehabilitated run-down houses, fought development and protested polluting factories.

Magaziner is defensive about his time improving

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Brockton, calling it "in retrospect a pretty quixotic venture." His disillusionment seems to stem in part from the fact that the students became unpopular with many of those they were trying to help. But Magaziner says real disenchantment set in when several of the shoe factories that were the mainstay of the town's economy closed suddenly. "I think I came to realize that what we were doing was outside the mainstream," he says. In 1973, after two years, he and his friends abandoned Brockton, leaving no durable legacy. Magaziner says the desire to make money had nothing to do with his career change.

Management consulting meant a different culture, but intellectually it was less of a departure than it appeared. Consultants study, analyze, write reports and try to sell recommendations to the companies that hire them. At BCG, the hottest firm in the field in the early 1970s, Magaziner was renowned for thoroughness, slovenliness and workaholism. Former colleagues still tell of him paying secretaries out of his own pocket to work through the weekend, and of his coming soaking wet or without shoelaces to meetings with corporate bigwigs.

In the 1970s BCG was known for a type of analysis called the "product portfolio" or the "growth-share matrix." Its consultants would divide a firm's assets into four quadrants: dogs, stars, cows and question marks. The idea was to milk your low-growth but high market share cash cows, kick out your low-growth, low-revenue dogs and fund your high-growth but low market share stars (as well as your potentially high-growth question marks). Magaziner's innovation was to apply the formula—which shortly fell out of fashion—to countries. In 1977 he got a BCG client, Volvo, to finance a study of the Swedish economy. He set up a group house in Stockholm, worked for six months and wrote a tract called "A Framework for Swedish Industrial Policy."

The so-called "Boston Report" was controversial in Sweden because it told the government to give up on some industries (dogs) and support others (stars). Magaziner believed Sweden should stop subsidizing sectors in which it could not be competitive, such as shipbuilding, paper mills and coal mines. Instead, he thought, the government should funnel resources to high-tech sectors. Most economists disagreed; they thought Sweden, which was running huge deficits in the 1970s, needed to quit subsidizing industry altogether. Magaziner's report also ignored the high rates of marginal taxation and the bloated public sector, which have led to Sweden's current—and deep—economic crisis. The Swedish study, which went unheeded for the most part by the government, is another well-intentioned effort Magaziner now feels compelled to downplay; he calls it a "feeling-the-way type of report."

Publicity about the Swedish study was enough to offend BCG's corporate sensibility (it is apparently still so embarrassed about the report that it refused a request from the Swedish Embassy to provide a copy for this story). But Magaziner wanted to do more of the same. BCG refused to allow him to do other country studies. So, in 1979 he decided to set up his own shop. Magaziner's wife, Suzanne McTigue, whom he met at BCG, joined him in the new venture, which they called Telesis. The company's p.r. said the name derived from the ancient Greek for "well-planned progress" (though it actually means something closer to "event fulfillment"). Telesis did studies for Ireland, Australia and Israel, among others, as well as private-sector strategic work.

The drift of Magaziner's ideas is captured in his published writing of the time. His 1980 monograph *Japanese Industrial Policy*, written with BCG colleague Thomas Hout, details the Japanese government's intervention in various sectors. "The Japanese ... share a remarkably common view on the legitimacy of national government as guide and mediator," they wrote, admiringly. Magaziner spelled out his views at length in a book he wrote with Robert Reich in 1982, *Minding America's Business*. It argues that business and government should "develop a coherent and coordinated industrial policy whose aim is to raise the real income of our citizens by improving the pattern of investments rather than focusing only on aggregate investment levels." Magaziner now says he didn't mean to advocate European-style industrial policy for the United States. But if the murky book says anything, it says that. "The industrial policies of Japan, West Germany and France have been more successful than U.S. policies because they have explicitly and consciously aimed at improving the international competitiveness of their businesses," he and Reich wrote.

The book is marred by a central fallacy. As Paul Krugman, an economist at MIT, points out in a forthcoming article in *Foreign Affairs*, the authors labor under the misconception that high-value-added sectors of the economy, where they believe the greatest potential for productivity growth lies, are synonymous with high technology. In fact, the highest value-added sectors are cigarettes, petroleum refining, autos and steel. Aerospace and electronics are only average in terms of value added. "Magaziner just announced that he had the solution to the problem of economic growth, without talking to any economists," Krugman says. "It was a stunningly ignorant book—a willfully ignorant book. You can be an industrial policy advocate and get facts right. What's really interesting is that he showed no inclination whatsoever to kick the tires of his idea."

Flawed or otherwise, Magaziner found a laboratory for his ideas in Rhode Island, which had been his home for several years. The Greenhouse Compact, so called because it attempted to "grow" high-tech businesses, was his most ambitious public policy foray to date when he began it in 1982. It was nothing less than an attempt to develop an industrial policy for the state. The Greenhouse Compact had, naturally, all the accoutrements of a Magaziner project. He began with a mammoth study of the history and condition of Rhode Island industry, then wrote a 1,100-page report. The idea of the $250 million plan was to emulate the Japanese or Europeans in fostering the development of industries that were likely to prosper. Again Magaziner proved to be a fine analyst of

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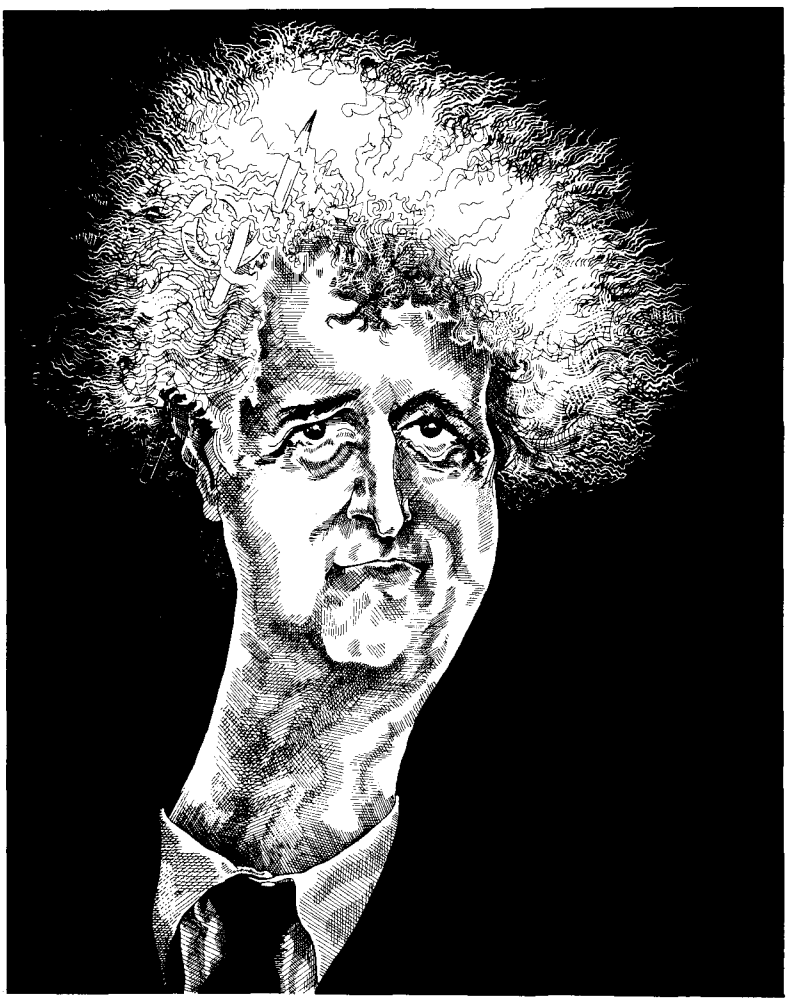
problems, in this case the state's industrial decline. But once again, it was far from clear that his audacious total solution would solve those problems.

Magaziner did a good job winning the support of elites, including bankers, business people, organized labor, the news media and the state legislature, which passed the plan overwhelmingly. He had, it seemed, everyone who mattered except the public. The biggest source of resistance was a proposed one-time surcharge on incomes. But the plan also appeared to present a ripe opportunity for the sort of political corruption for which mob-dominated Rhode Island is famous. Shortly before the plan came up for a vote, two Democratic Party leaders appointed themselves to the Greenhouse commission. "People thought it was a deal for the insiders," says Paul Choquette, head of the state's largest construction company. "The opposition pictured it as a big brother kind of program." It was defeated by a 4 to 1 margin.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Because it was never tried, we'll never know if the Greenhouse would have worked. But economists point to several fundamental flaws in the concept. The first was regarding a small state as an island. Rhode Island, which depends on its neighbors, Massachusetts and Connecticut, doesn't function as an independent economic entity. Thus it was bizarre for Magaziner to evaluate the state's trade balance with other states. But the larger problem is that when even very smart people try to pick winners they don't always pick right. Magaziner was specific about which he thought were hopeless cases: heavy industry and manufacturing. And he named those he thought were going to thrive in the coming decade: robotics, thin film materials, underwater electronics and food preservation. As it turned out, the biggest job growth in Rhode Island since 1983 has been in the service sector, an area to which Magaziner has never paid much attention.

Magaziner, however, seems to have drawn a different lesson from the Greenhouse failure: not that government can't guide private investment effectively, but that it should structure its involvement differently. Greenhouse led him to his current view that industrial policy needs to be broader and less industry-specific, focused "less on sort of microintervention" and "more on getting the horizontal policies," in his lingo. As his ideas evolved, Magaziner looked for a chance to try his experiment in a national laboratory. He advised Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis (as well as Gary Hart) during their doomed campaigns.

After Greenhouse, Magaziner returned to Telesis. "He was involved as a consultant for foreign governments—Japan, Sweden, Ireland—that were taking a very interventionist strategy," says Mark Patinkin, a Rhode Island writer who became a friend of Magaziner's when the two collaborated on a book some years later. "He felt it was a more enlightened strategy we were missing the boat on." Because of the secrecy under which consultants operate, it is hard to assess the quality of Magaziner's work. It is never clear just what he advised, whether the company took his advice and if its success or failure resulted from his counsel. Magaziner stresses he had "a very high retention rate among clients"—at $600 per hour. "That's usually an indication that what you're doing is working," he says. "You can't get away with bullshitting a company." Well, sometimes you can, but Magaziner doesn't coast very far on the schmooze factor. As he says, "I don't have the kind of personality where CEOs hire me to go play golf with them." And he is thought well of at places like Corning, where he consulted on catalytic converters, and Rubbermaid, where he offered advice on the threat from office supply superstores.

The instances where more is known, sadly, tend to be the high-profile disasters—though the extent of Magaziner's culpability is uncertain. The biggest was Magaziner's work for General Electric's refrigerator division. It began as a typical Magaziner effort. The company was losing money on its machines, so Magaziner crisscrossed the globe taking apart compressors—refrigerator engines. "He got right down into the grubbiness of the thing," says

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Donald Awbrey, a G.E. general manager in charge of the project. Magaziner managed to get inside the factories of G.E.'s competitors in Malaysia, Singapore, Denmark, Italy and Japan, and "trapped everything he could in his mind," Awbrey says. Magaziner's conclusion was that if G.E. devised a rotary compressor, instead of its old-fashioned reciprocating compressor, it could produce fridges for less than its competitors could. Magaziner convinced CEO Jack Welch, and G.E. built a new plant in Columbia, Tennessee. In his 1989 book, *The Silent War*, Magaziner takes credit for saving hundreds of American jobs. But the new compressors were defective, and G.E. ended up losing half a billion dollars when it had to replace 1 million of them. "It was a design flaw," Magaziner says, "combined with the fact that they rushed it to market." Another nonsuccess was Wang. Magaziner was brought in to try to save the computer company, which was close to bankruptcy in 1990. He recommended paring down the workforce and moving out of hardware in favor of software. As he says, "We basically recommended they go through a radical restructure. And that was a devastating conclusion that organizationally couldn't be accepted." The company has since emerged from bankruptcy protection, but no one there will talk about Magaziner.

In the late 1980s Magaziner reached what Patinkin calls a fork in the road. "He had one of the dream business strategy consulting jobs. He would fly to Paris for a meeting, fly to Japan, fly to Sweden, then fly back to speak to a few Fortune 500 CEOs," Patinkin says. "But past a certain point he was bored by it. What he really wanted to do was economic strategy on a national basis." In 1986 Magaziner decided to sell Telesis—for $6 million—and to start a new firm that would serve as a personal policy study institute. He called it SJS, after the initials of his three children, Seth, Jonathan and Sarah. He also decided to write another book.

The Silent War, infinitely more readable than the book he produced with Reich, is a kind of *Jungle Book* of competitiveness. It tells the story of how Korea became king in microwave ovens, how Volvo thrived by moving into luxury cars, how Corning cornered the market in optical waveguides and so on. But there is an odd contradiction at the heart of the book. Magaziner and co-author Patinkin argue for an explicit if less micro-focused industrial policy; they assert the need for an equivalent of the National Security Council to direct resources to American companies for R&D, worker training and export assistance. But their most dramatic examples are of companies such as Corning and A.T. Cross in the United States, and Samsung in Korea, which prospered by investing in research and thinking about their global competition—and without government help. In the field of high-definition television, where Magaziner argued that U.S. companies were sure to flop without subsidy, he has since been disproved, as American companies have trounced their planned and subsidized competitors.

The view of trade as a technological war being lost by the United States got Magaziner into hot water soon after his book came out. When two scientists at the University of Utah claimed they had demonstrated the existence of nuclear fusion at room temperature, the school had no trouble recruiting Magaziner—for $20,000 per month—to argue for $25 million in federal support. Magaziner had long complained that technologies developed in America, like VCRs, had a bad habit of moving overseas. As recounted in Gary Taubes's book *Bad Science*, he testified to a congressional committee in 1989 that cold fusion threatened to do the same. The Japanese had "fusion fever," he said. Thus the United States had better gamble on it "for the sake of my children and all of America's next generation." Cold fusion, of course, turned out to be a complete chimera.

In the 1980s episodes like this helped give industrial policy a bad name and Magaziner removed the phrase from the thumbnail biography included in *The Silent War*. He also revised his ideas to move even farther away from direct government intervention in specific sectors. The two big projects he undertook at SJS focused on problems common to all or most American industry: training and health care. The first of the two studies, sponsored by the National Center on Education and the Economy, of which Hillary Rodham Clinton was a fellow board member, was another classic effort. As chairman of the commission, which gathered two former secretaries of labor, several CEOs and union chieftains, Magaziner spent a year bouncing between Germany, Denmark, France, Japan, Singapore, Ireland and—of course—Sweden to see how other countries trained workers. According to his report, the commission interviewed 2,000 people and read "a small mountain of government and private reports."

Magaziner discovered that most executives didn't think they suffered from a skills shortage. But that didn't dampen his enthusiasm for designing another plan. The problem was that businesses "still cling to old forms of work organization." The blueprint detailed in his 1990 report, "America's Choice: High Skills Or Low Wages!," is an amazingly complicated answer to it. Magaziner recommended a pay-or-play arrangement—analogous to the health care concept later fashionable with Democrats. Under his system, all employers would be required either to spend 1 percent of payroll on training or to contribute the same amount to a public fund. Education would be remade around the issuance of certificates of "mastery." An infrastructure of boards and agencies, sketched out in elaborate flowcharts that fill the margins of the report, would be created to administer the plan.

In many respects, Magaziner's training system resembles the alliance system envisioned in his health care proposal. A federal board would monitor state boards which in turn would oversee regional and local boards. Here, the purpose would be to certify training programs, administer tests and so on. It would be up to the boards, for instance, to decide whether to issue certificates allowing 16-year-olds to work, But once again, it's not clear that this cumbersome bureaucracy, with an annual cost of $73 *billion*, would produce any benefit. With all the regulation in the world, it would still be next to impossi-

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ble to determine whether private expenditures were going toward useful training. Studies of smaller-scale existing programs by the Labor Department have mostly shown negligible to modest effects.

A parallel effort was the "Aging 2000" project in Rhode Island, which was finished in 1991. Once again, Magaziner did a huge study, delving into the history of federal health care reform efforts and making hospital rounds with doctors and nurses. He was horrified by the layers of micromanagement—double-checkers second-guessing the decisions of other checkers. "It became clear that the incentives were all wrong," Magaziner says. "It was leading to massive, massive inefficiencies." His report—400 pages—suggested improvements in hospital procedure to heighten efficiency. Many of the ideas are good ones. As with Greenhouse, however, he was unable to translate them into reality, or even into real-life experiment. He figured out how the system should work, but was not able to persuade any doctors, hospitals or patients to serve as guinea pigs. Marsha Fretwell, the medical director of Aging 2000, acknowledges that after nearly four years of research, nothing has actually happened. She says the best prospect for Aging 2000 is as a health care alliance under the Magaziner-Clinton plan.

Magaziner's ideas found two vehicles in the 1992 election cycle. The first was Paul Tsongas, whose campaign manifesto, *A Call to Economic Arms*, baldly called for a European-style industrial policy. Magaziner helped write it. The second was Bill Clinton. Magaziner jumped to the Clinton campaign when his old friend decided to run. In early 1992 Magaziner was not yet viewed as Clinton's health policy guru. Indeed, he was expected to become something like industrial policy czar, or secretary of commerce or secretary of labor, the jobs he had been grooming himself for since the 1970s, should Clinton get elected. The positions he promoted within the campaign were along these lines. Magaziner got a version of his training proposal included in *Putting People First*, the Clinton manifesto, which upped the mandate to 1.5 percent of payroll. He was also the chief influence on the plan's "Rebuilding America" section, which recommended government sponsorship of high-speed rail, something called "short-haul aircraft," an agency to channel R&D spending to new industries and "conversion loans" to defense contractors. "Within the chain of campaign he was a free agent," says one campaign alumnus. "But we clearly understood that this was someone who had a special relationship with the candidate and needed attention."

Magaziner also tried to take charge of the development of Clinton's health care proposal, a subject the two had discussed at Renaissance Weekend in 1991 while Magaziner was at work on Aging 2000. In this bid, however, he came into conflict with others on the campaign. Magaziner clashed with Clinton's health adviser, Judith Feder, and others—not over "managed competition," which neither the candidate nor Magaziner had yet endorsed, but over financing issues. On the basis of his observations in Rhode Island, Magaziner asserted that universal coverage could be paid for solely through administrative savings, and by 1996. "A lot of his instincts on health care spending were due to what he witnessed as a business consultant," says Clinton economic policy adviser Gene Sperling. "He was extremely optimistic in the amount of savings that you could generate." Feder and others on the campaign believed universal coverage would require new taxes or spending cuts. After a contentious eleventh-hour conference call, *Putting People First* was published without any figures for health care.

Once Clinton was elected, it still seemed Magaziner would end up having something to do with economics. Reich, who was in charge of economic policy for the transition, devised what he called "counterstaffing": assigning people to subject areas that contradicted their basic proclivities. Magaziner, the chief backer of expensive new schemes, was put in charge of deficit reduction. In this role he became, briefly, the most adamant internal advocate of fulfilling Clinton's pledge to halve the deficit in four years. Typically, Magaziner thought the goal could be achieved mostly by increased efficiency, with little in the way of cuts from existing programs (the revised savings estimates for Al Gore's Reinventing Government proposals suggest otherwise). He also worked on defense conversion, arguing that the transition from military to civilian production should not be "left to market forces."

During the transition Magaziner and Reich became involved in a power struggle, the details of which remain foggy. According to a story by David Segal in *The Washington Monthly*, Magaziner made a power grab, asking that he be given control over health care and the Department of Labor. Reich, reportedly, then went to Clinton and told him, more in sorrow than in anger, that his old friend Magaziner was too radical. Reich and Magaziner say this didn't happen. (Magaziner denies he and Reich have had a falling out, but rather have had merely "personality conflicts." Reich says they're great friends.) But Magaziner not long ago told John Mulligan of the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* that he turned down Labor and Commerce, which sounded like a dig at Reich since most in the administration don't think Magaziner was offered either. Magaziner told me he didn't want a Cabinet post. But according to another senior official, Magaziner was distraught at not getting one, and campaigned to be put in charge of domestic policy, a position that went to Carol Rasco. Instead, he ended up as special assistant to the president with responsibility—under Hillary Rodham Clinton—for health care.

Various people in the administration wanted to run the health care effort: HHS Secretary Donna Shalala, Feder and Rasco. After the inauguration, it was still in doubt who would really be in charge. But Magaziner grabbed hold of the issue by setting up his enormous study process and keeping others at a distance from it. "Ira has been the choke valve on information flow to the president," says one Clinton health care adviser. "He effectively shut Donna and the others out." But what seemed like a pure power grab was also Magaziner approaching the issue the way he always has.

The result was perhaps the apogee of Magaziner's

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management consultant career. He designed the task force as a series of fifteen compartmentalized "clusters," with thirty-four subordinate "working groups." According to Marmor, this is the way firms like Telesis operate. "You comprehensively cover the landscape, dividing up the industry into component parts," he says. "This keeps the drones at work and leaves the strategic consultant at the center." Magaziner revealed himself to be a control freak. Some task force participants were chagrined when he wouldn't give them home numbers of colleagues on other working groups. The reason was he didn't want independent power bases developing. Members of different groups were to meet only in tollgate sessions, where they would present options to him, the tollkeeper, sometimes for ten hours at a time. Magaziner says he learned the tollgate concept through his work for Japanese corporations. It's a process, he says, for "projects where you have a relatively short amount of time to accomplish a very complex task and you have to bring together people with expertise in a whole series of different disciplines and keep them on the same time schedule."

Given Magaziner's past, the problems of the Health Security Act do not exactly come as a surprise. It is analytically sound, but politically clumsy. Magaziner has sold the plan to his most important client—CEO Bill Clinton—but has failed with almost everybody else in the company. The division heads—Lloyd Bentsen, Donna Shalala and Laura Tyson—are miffed they weren't involved in developing the plan, and greeted it with skepticism. And because Magaziner produced his proposal in secret (which he now says was a mistake) before presenting it to Congress, he failed to bring key shop-floor managers into the process. "Part of the reason Congress doesn't like him is that he couldn't give them the information they needed in a reliable way," says one task force member. "They were supposed to endorse the plan without having input that was consistent." Magaziner seems to make a new enemy every time he visits Capitol Hill. Committee chairmen find him arrogant and inflexible. So do rank and file members. Rhode Island Republican Representative Ron Machtley was surprised, for instance, when Magaziner upbraided him for not supporting the president. "He's probably the world's worst politician," says Awbrey, who worked with Magaziner at G.E. and Rubbermaid.

Magaziner says he has been advocating bringing a political person in since the spring. But what he means is someone to handle the public relations job. He doesn't want anyone else negotiating with Congress on the president's behalf. Even now that Harold Ickes has finally agreed to become deputy chief of staff (with power over health care), Magaziner continues to give off don't-tread-on-me vibes. "A lot of what's going to be happening with Congress is the policy, and the policy changes. And I'll continue to be in charge of that because I know the policy best." And that could lead to a disaster with the many members of Congress who dislike Magaziner more than they dislike his proposal.

Above all, the technocratic logic and total ambition of the Clinton health care plan speak to Magaziner's past in a way that is ominous for the president's future. What Magaziner has always lacked is an awareness of how the systems he designs can go askew in practice. He sees very clearly the faults in existing arrangements. But he never subjects his own contrivances to the same scrutiny. At Brown he designed a curriculum that would be ideal if all students were angels, or Iras. Some are. Many more coast through. In the Greenhouse Compact, he made a similarly optimistic assumption about one of the most rotten political cultures in the country, an assumption the electorate fortunately didn't share. In his constant attempts at grandiose industrial policy, he smartly sees where fallible economic actors go wrong, but then absurdly overestimates the power of the economist and the politician to avoid the same problems.

With the health care plan, this tendency reaches a crescendo. Magaziner sees existing vice, arguing, for example, that doctors, prompted by self-interest and self-protection, often supply too much care in the form of unnecessary tests and procedures. And he rightly tries to correct this problem. But he doesn't worry about abuse by those who will wield enormous power under *his* system through the new structure of a health care alliance. "The people this plan trusts the most, those who are absolutely filled with good will, who do nothing but the best for society, are governors and state legislators," says Lawrence O'Donnell, chief of staff of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's Finance Committee, "the people who gave you congressional districts." O'Donnell worries that the alliances "will become permanent employment armies for governors." There is also the hazard of alliances being infiltrated by the people they are supposed to regulate. One of the few existing models of a managed competition plan, Florida's, has been plagued by this problem. "The purchasing alliances are going to wield enormous influence, and special interests are going to try to influence them," says Bob Rogan, spokesman for Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration. "Based on our experience you have to guard against that."

"Magaziner is not an incremental guy," says Patinkin. "He doesn't like to hit a single. He only tries to hit home runs." The people Magaziner calls his political heroes—Jefferson, Louis Brandeis, Adlai Stevenson, Eleanor Roosevelt—shared this quality. They were, he says, "not full of the social graces of their times," but were "willing to take risks, personal risks," in their pursuit of radical change. "They succeeded sometimes and failed sometimes. But they didn't crumble. They would keep going ahead with it."

Right-wingers misunderstand Magaziner by casting him as an ultraliberal with a faith in government solutions. That's not really the case. Magaziner's blueprints have become less and less government-based over the years, in keeping with political fashion. But he does remain in his heart a social planner with an unbounded faith in the grandiose systems he designs, whatever mixture of private sector and public sector they draw upon. His recipe may work this time. Unfortunately, there's little in his record to support that hope. •

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A Global Magna Carta for the 20th Century

An Initiative By
Harold W. Bostrom, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
Director (Retired) – Population Crisis Committee
Vice-Chairman – Victor/Bostrom Fund
Co-Founder and Director – United Earth Aid Society
Co-Founder and Director – Population Institute
Founder and President – The Bostrom Corporation

Supported by
Claus Nobel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
President – United Earth Aid Society
Director (Retired) – Population Crisis Committee

First Priority:
A 10% reduction annually, over a five-year period, of armament expenditures by all governments of Planet Earth. Attempts to solve the problems of Earth by war must be replaced by new thinking. If we are to survive as a family of nations, we must all be amenable to inspection to determine our collective honesty.

Second Priority:
Further reductions in military budgets of all nations as quickly as is consistent with safety for all in an open society.

In achieving the two priorities, legions of vigorous men and women will be available for the redeeming work of planetary restoration and reformation. Funds resulting from the reduction of armament expenditures could be initially allocated as follows:

1. INTENSIVE STUDY BY ALL NATIONS TO DETERMINE OPTIMUM WORLD POPULATION.
Equilibrium between Nature and Man, in view of the finite nature of Earth's resources can, and must, be determined. All governments to support potential sources for increased food protein. The return of the small farm to the dispossessed farmer; increased food production with population stability and management — these will improve the human condition. Wildlife propagation on the lands and in the seas, to provide additional protein resources, must have a high priority.

2. A CRASH PROGRAM FOR MASS TRANSIT.
Able bodied peoples now on welfare or unemployed, to be used in this and many other energy-conserving programs. The military establishment's organization, intelligence and manpower in all nations to be put to full use to deliver humanity from the peril of energy depletion and subsequent pollution. Struggles over Earth's diminishing energy resources lead to war; there is no alternative but to act in mutual trust and honesty. Inflationary pressures are enhanced by the squandering of significant resources.

3. A CRASH PROGRAM TO PURGE THE AIR AND WATERS OF POLLUTANTS.
Unless pollution is corrected expeditiously, it could be the end of all life on Earth. The further destruction of the resources of the continental shelves must be controlled by pragmatic action, for Oxygen is another primary building block of life which is being destroyed, along with marine protein. A modest lifestyle for all, consistent with minimal effluent effect, is a prime objective to which all should subscribe.

4. MANHATTAN-TYPE CRASH PROGRAM TO DEVELOP SOLAR AND/OR FUSION ENERGY.
New technology deriving from innovative research will hopefully provide safe, unlimited sources of new energy. As a result, petroleum (a carboniferous resource) could be reserved for medical, agricultural and other prime needs. Carbon is one of the four building blocks of life. Its squandering results in air pollution.

5. REDUCE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE BUREAUCRACY.
An 'honest day's work for an honest day's pay' is a prime requisite. This must become the credo in both the private and political sectors now as it was at the turn of the century. Too much mental and physical potential is presently wasted.

6. ESTABLISH EARTH ETHICS.
Nature has been much abused by the misapplication of technology. Dangers must be assessed and policies set up to assure a continuum of life for all Mankind. We must bequeath a world to succeeding generations that will support a life worth living. Compliance with Earth Ethics will assure this goal.

This GLOBAL MAGNA CARTA FOR THE 20TH CENTURY shall become a new Bill of Rights, to deliver peoples everywhere from the disaster of war and the destruction of the life support systems of Planet Earth. Time is a resource in these proposed programs and time is of the essence! These proposals can be implemented only if fear and enmity are replaced with TRUST in a world brotherhood!

For more information please write to: Harold W. Bostrom, 2519 North Wahl Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Spielberg Revisited

If a film has genuine worth, it's more than one film. It changes with further viewings. The second time you see it, it's larger. This time you aren't "distracted" by the story, by discovering what happens next. You can concentrate on the qualities that made you want to see it again, usually acting or felicities of vision or both. (Third and later viewings—of especially fine films—have an even stranger effect: as you learn more about them, you simultaneously feel you're seeing them for the first time. This happened to me recently with *Grand Illusion* and *Citizen Kane*, each of which I've seen upward of thirty times. Though I now saw even more in them, I had a feeling of fresh arrival.)

I don't know how many times I'll see *Schindler's List*, but ever since my first viewing (THE NEW REPUBLIC, December 13, 1993), I've known that I wanted to see it again, soon. For two kinds of reasons. First, personal. I'd expressed concern that people who know something about the Holocaust might find the earlier portions—ghetto enclosure and labor camps—overly familiar. Well, I know something about the Holocaust, and I wanted to examine more carefully what had happened to me, what might happen again, while watching the film. This second time, I was again so taken by Spielberg's insistent honesty, by the heightened factuality, that I saw how my familiarity *helped*, made the film a confirmation and a deepening.

Then there were sheerly cinematic reasons. I wanted to see the "second" film; and throughout, I noted subtle compositions, astringent editing, overall vigor of construction that had certainly affected me the first time—I had thought it superbly made—but now seemed even more astonishingly fine.

But with the second viewing of *Schindler's List*, some other things became clear. The film rests on two large motions of change, one within the film and one, so to speak, behind it. The first is Schindler's metamorphosis, from hustling opportunist to self-disregarding savior. Some viewers have objected that Spielberg and his screenwriter, Steven Zaillian, didn't articulate the change vividly enough; but to have done more would have been to tamper with history. Thomas Keneally, from whose book the film derives, is specific about the unspecificity:

> One of the commonest sentiments of Schindler Jews is still "I don't know why he did it." It can be said to begin with that Oskar was a gambler, was a sentimentalist who loved the transparency, the simplicity of doing good; that Oskar was by temperament an anarchist who loved to ridicule the system; and that beneath the hearty sensuality lay a capacity to be outraged by human savagery, to react to it and not to be overwhelmed. But none of this, jotted down, added up, explains the doggedness with which, in the autumn of 1944, he prepared a final haven for [the Jews who worked in his Kraków factory].

Recurrently, beginning in the middle of the film, we see Schindler being shocked beneath his poise by the blacker and blacker wolfishness of the Nazis whose party pin he wears. But never is there a Moment of Truth, together with an angelic choir on the sound track. Spielberg's artistic triumph here is that he refuses to explicate, to interfere with what is actually known. He leaves the mystery of Schindler's goodness as finally inexplicable as the mystery of the "human savagery" around him. (This, for me, is the true subject of the film.)

There's another instance of this avoidance of italics. Near the end, when Schindler assembles his 1,100 Jewish workers on his plant floor to tell them that the war is over and they are free, the German army guards, fully armed, assemble on a sort of balcony above. Schindler addresses the guards: says he knows that they have orders to liquidate his workers; and asks them whether they want to go home as men or as murderers. After a moment's pause, one of the soldiers leaves—and is soon followed by the others. Spielberg's exquisite touch is that he never shows the face of this first soldier, no twitching, no making up his mind; after the pause we simply see the soldier pass the camera. Yes, we soon see the guards' commander wavering in decision, but he has become a character who needs finishing off. The bellwether soldier is a particle of history.

The second major change is the metamorphosis of Spielberg himself. It's not possible to compare the horror itself with a film about it; still, we might venture to compare the effect of the Holocaust on Schindler with the effect of knowledge of the Holocaust on Spielberg. We know from much recent interviewing that the Holocaust has long been a presence for him (as it was with Schindler) but how he has concentrated for the most part on ingenious com-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

In the Name of the Father. *About the Guildford Four, the Irish people wrongly convicted of terrorism in 1974, released fifteen years later. Daniel Day-Lewis and Emma Thompson figure strongly. (Reviewed 1/3/94)* **Philadelphia.** *Tom Hanks as a gay lawyer with AIDS, Denzel Washington as his lawyer in a discrimination suit. Forceful, candid, unsettling. (1/10&17/94)* **The Remains of the Day.** *Anthony Hopkins, as the butler of a Stately Home, Emma Thompson as the housekeeper, give large dimension to a small, symbolic story. Less subtle than the novel, but what acting! (12/6/93)* **Schindler's List.** *See this page.* **—SK**

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merce (as did Schindler). Then (again like Schindler) the force of the horror burst through to alter him.

How is that alteration manifested? Initially, with the choice of subject. Still, the filmmaking might have been Spielberg-clever. All the cleverness was renounced. Among the new powerful austerities, including the use of black and white, two elements stand out as warrants of gravity. First, the faces. Face after Jewish face appears, most of them only once, and each of those faces is a testament. By filming in Poland, Spielberg was able to use faces engraved with knowledge, inheritors of grief, that certify and magnify his story. Though they are faces of our contemporaries, they are nonetheless faces of the past.

The best compliment to Liam Neeson, the Schindler, and Ben Kingsley, the Jewish accountant, is that they don't obtrude as actors. Their faces fit. This is also true of Embeth Davidtz, as Helena, the camp inmate selected by the Nazi commandant to be his housemaid.

Then the second element, the children. There are many, as there must be, and some of them are centered for a few moments each. They never seem to act. Spielberg has worked well with children before but always in childish matters. Here the children cannot possibly understand much, but they are convinced of *something*. Spielberg has brought these children up to the film's level of truth.

The small boy fleeing the German army's roundup of Jews in the Kraków ghetto for deportation and death, this boy who dives through the toilet seat in an outhouse, this boy who surfaces in the ordure and discovers that three other children are there already, this boy I'll remember. There's a notorious German army photo of a small Jewish boy, arms upraised, being marched out of the Warsaw ghetto by soldiers—Bergman used that photo in *Persona*. The Warsaw boy's face is in the world's memory—in reality. This Kraków boy's face, ordure-streaked—Spielberg's attempt to bear witness fifty years later—may join that earlier photo in the world's memory. •

The Anatomy of Melancholy

BY JED PERL

Mark Rothko: A Biography by James E. B. Breslin

(University of Chicago Press, 712 pp., $39.95)

Mark Rothko is an unsettlingly gloomy figure to contemplate as he makes his way through the bright, booming spectacle that is postwar American art. In 1956 the jazz historian Rudi Blesh, a contemporary of Rothko's, observed that the artist's "gentleness is only a little less terrifying than his anger." And around the same time William Seitz, a graduate student in art history at Princeton who would later become a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, wrote of the "genial hostility" of Rothko's conversation. Rothko must have provoked these paradoxical responses. While Jackson Pollock turned his unhappiness into drunken theatricality and made an early exit behind the wheel of an automobile in 1956, Rothko went to pieces more or less in private and over a period of two decades. Blesh wrote that Rothko had "boiled and fumed and sulked" his way through the '50s. His saturnine spirit appealed to younger bohemians who were anxious to make idols of an earlier generation's tormented souls, but even so, it cannot have been easy for Rothko always to be the pessimist among the optimists. Amidst the prosperity of the '60s, he was anxious that people remember how much he had suffered as a child in provincial Russia and as an artist starting out in Depression New York. When Rothko took his life on February 25, 1970, he was an ornery 66-year-old who would complain that the young artists, even when they came to praise him, were actually out to get him. Maybe he was right; but he must also have known that this postwar generation had everything to do with giving the New York art scene its electricity, an electricity that Rothko, while he was incapable of enjoying it in the direct way that, say, de Kooning did, had benefited from. Rothko's prices were rapidly rising; and in 1961 he received the singular honor of becoming the first living member of his generation to be given a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. (Pollock's retrospective had gone up some months after he was

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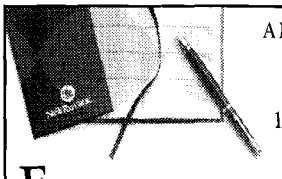

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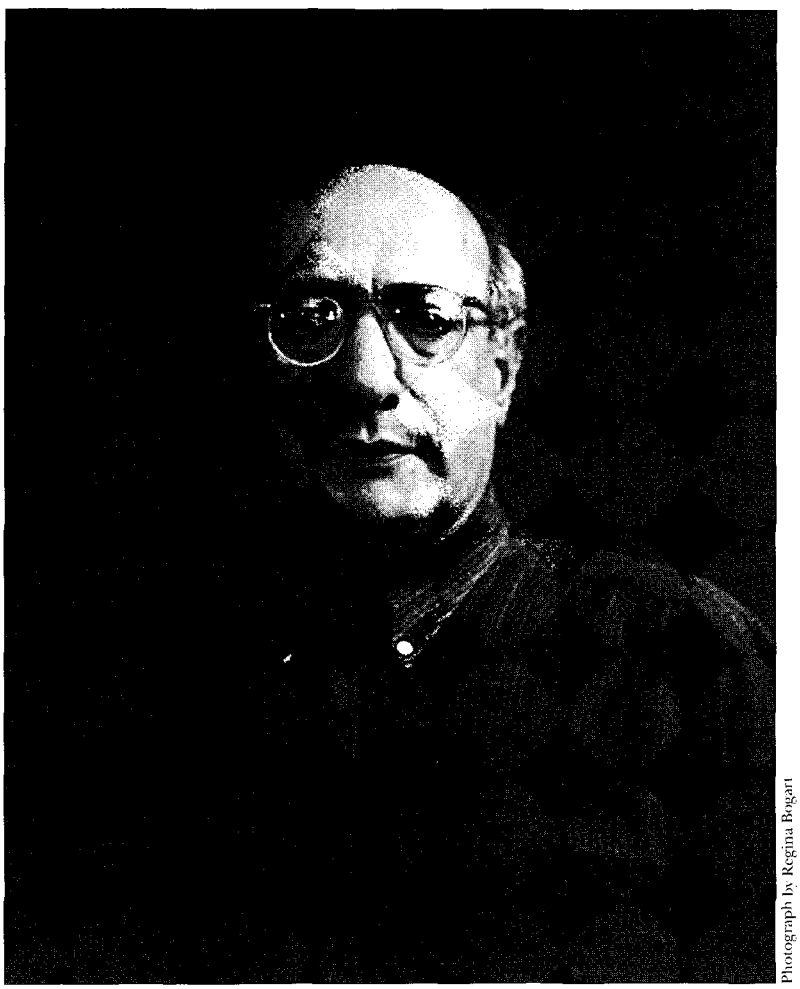
laid to rest in the Springs cemetery on Long Island.)

James E. B. Breslin, in his biography of Rothko, never finds a tone that's appropriate to writing about the grim protagonist of what is in many respects a classic American success story. Rothko was, by all accounts, an unhappy man, but perhaps his biographer need not have been quite so attentive to his unhappiness. A life that ends in suicide is not necessarily all a prologue to that awful event. "At 17," Breslin writes, "Rothko felt the emptiness and despair which would make him vulnerable to depression throughout his life, but which, beginning in 1949, he would transform into empty bands of colored light." Breslin has a deterministic way of linking Rothko's paintings of the '50s, with their shimmering color and fade-away edges, to the artist's emotional life. Art is not the sum of psychological experience. Rothko's most distinctive paintings, whatever they owe to the surrealist spirit of New York in the '40s, are also, with their juicily melting colors and rather stark elegance, paradigms of '50s chic. Clement Greenberg, in his most complete statement about Rothko's generation, the essay "'American-Type' Painting" which was published in *Partisan Review* in 1955, referred to these Rothkos as being "among the largest gems of abstract expressionism." Greenberg did away with this not exactly graceful characterization when he reprinted the essay six years later in *Art and Culture*, but I don't think he was wrong originally to describe Rothko's paintings in terms that bring to mind luxury objects. Breslin wants to see these paintings as the ultimate expression of Rothko's unhappiness, but what are we to make of angst when it is so prettily packaged?

Breslin, who teaches English at Berkeley, takes the side of liberal reason in the current academic debates. In this biography he carefully avoids the kind of far-fetched interpretations of abstract expressionism that we have been getting from a new generation of theoretically minded art historians. But Breslin never figures out how to bring to life this ferociously domineering and embarrassingly needy artist, and I can't see that his two-cent psychology is much better than the rad's two-cent post-structuralism. Breslin isn't a voyeuristic biographer, but his book, which is at least twice as long as it has any business being, falls into many of the standard traps of the genre. Breslin depends too much on taped interviews. We are presented with other people's retrospective opinions about Rothko and his family and friends, rather than the author's own imaginative reconstruction of Rothko and his world. Breslin's book is, particularly in its earlier sections, a thicket of quotation marks. Here is a piece of his description of Rothko's mother, Kate. "All members of the family stress her 'bustling' energy and force. She was 'very passionate, very strong-willed'; 'a very determined woman'; 'a good manager' who was the 'driving force' behind the family; 'a very controlling person'; 'a tough cookie'; 'very strong'; 'a very powerful woman, center stage in every group.'" Doesn't Breslin realize that he has created a cardboard mother? Rothko's father, Jacob, who died in 1914, is said to have been the more intellectual and recessive parent. That the elder Rothkos represent a certain kind of Jewish marriage, with the man taking the more passive role in relation to the world, is undoubtedly true; but from a biographer's standpoint, it's the variations from the norm that ought to count.

Research can make a man crazy. Breslin has unearthed some adolescent poems that should probably never have seen the light of day, but he can't help but show them off and then overinterpret or misinterpret them. In "Salutation," which opens, "As a mother mourns for her child / I mourn," Breslin is glad to discover these lines: "Heaven is like a lamp in the fog / At the end of a long dark road." He believes that "the lines anticipate the distant, obscure light that shines from within Rothko's mature paintings," never considering that, by this logic, all romantic kitsch anticipates Rothko (which could be true, but is hardly what Breslin intends). Another poem, about cavemen, is inexplicably said to be about the Jews. Breslin likes connections, and doesn't much care if they make sense. One of his characteristic techniques is to juxtapose unrelated events. "The first full year of World War II for the United States, 1942, was also the last year of Rothko's marriage, a 'home front' characterized by frequent 'very violent arguments.'" Another example: "An eminent artist who would earn around $20,000 from his paintings that year, Rothko had exceeded his father, just as the abstract expressionists had surpassed the Cubists." I have no idea what Breslin means to say here.

Breslin set out to build a book around Rothko, as if he believed that if he wrote enough pages the artist would turn up somewhere. Rothko went to high school in Portland, Oregon, and Breslin presents a good deal of information about anti-Semitism there, so much that we may wonder how on earth Rothko managed to land a scholarship to Yale. But any thought that Breslin might be giving us just one side of the story is quickly overtaken by Breslin's discussion of anti-



Photograph by Regina Bogart

MARK ROTHKO, 1960

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Semitism at Yale. Obviously, Jewish immigrants had to jump many hurdles in this country in the early years of the century. What gets lost in Breslin's tale of woe is the other side of the story: the pull-out-all-the-stops appetite for life that carried many immigrants straight into the hurly-burly of American commercial and cultural life. In this book a person comes into view—Peggy Guggenheim, Betty Parsons—and we're off on a long digression that recounts the most familiar material. In 1968 when Rothko is in the hospital after suffering a serious aneurysm, Breslin slips into one of his favorite, litanylike recitations. "Rothko was almost sixty-five. He had survived anti-Semitism in Dvinsk, migration to Portland, the death of his father, poverty as an art student, poverty as an artist, a Depression, the death of his mother, two marriages, years of gout, years of tippling, periodic depressions and even success.... Now, he had survived an aneurysm." Well, you survive things and you die. That seems to be all that the Berkeley prof finally has to say about the New York artist.

There are artists whose work is so expansive, it seems to summarize the experience of an entire age, but this has rarely been the case in America, where the visual artist generally contends with a lack of confidence and a lack of context. Breslin presents Rothko as a singular genius, when it would be more accurate to treat him as an artist who was responding to the same forces that were shaping the work of many other artists in the '40s and '50s. Abstract art, the revolutionary development to which the Americans were devoted, had been invented in Europe in the years just before World War I. It had grown out of a desire to uncover the roots of seeing and picture-making, and that search for root causes had turned out to have a dramatic content that equaled anything in the older narrative art. The American abstractionists, coming in the wake of the European revolution, took expression—that modern drama—for the essence of abstract art. They believed that structure would take care of itself so long as the feeling was there.

The simplest way to explain what is unusual about the abstract art that was produced in America after World War II is this: the Europeans believed that abstract art expressed sensibility through its faith in structure, and the Americans believed that it did exactly the reverse. They made a religion of sensibility; and this was both their triumph and their undoing. Initially, there was a nerviness about the American painters that carried them through many of the pitfalls

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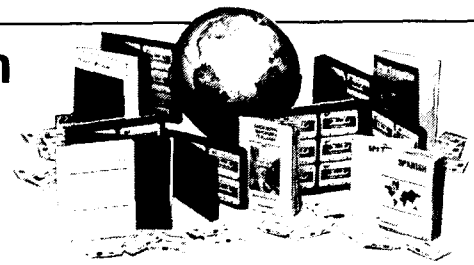

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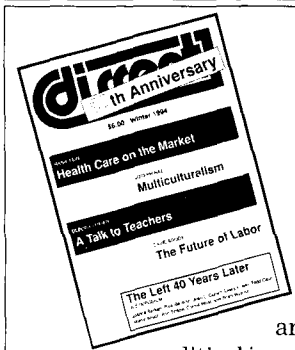

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of provincialism; it was the nerve that saved them from the provincial's hesitant brushwork and suffocating reverence for convention. Rothko had a rather shallow painting culture. He hadn't even really begun to paint until he left Yale. All he had was chutzpah. For a time in the '30s and '40s, when the effort to get any convincing image on canvas was tremendously absorbing, the struggle to make pictorial sense of his emotions was so real that it took care of structure. By the end of the '40s, however, when Rothko and his contemporaries were feeling very much (maybe all too much) in command of their emotions, the absence of structural imperatives turned out to inhibit the easy expression of a range of emotions. The paintings became increasingly, and then numbingly, repetitive.

Breslin's entire book, with its circling rhythms, is probably meant to have the character of an incantation that leads toward a revelation, the revelation being Rothko's paintings composed of deep-colored, soft-edged rectangles. Yet those paintings do not support the weight of feeling that Breslin (and Rothko) want to heap on them. Those Rothkos from the '50s and '60s are the only original works that this artist ever produced, if by original we mean a painting that does not look quite like any other painting. They are lavish yet severe, lyrical yet compressed, and the conjunction of opposites gives the best of them their lovely shimmer. Although by now it is accepted as inevitable that these Rothkos hang in the major museum galleries devoted to postwar American art, it does not follow that they have the internal inevitability that one knows from fully achieved art. Breslin writes about "Rothko's mature format, with two or three stacked rectangles"; but I think that everything that's wrong with Rothko's work is underlined by the biographer's decision to write about the artist in terms of his "format." The term comes from graphic design, and has next to nothing to do with painting. The inevitability of Rothko's paintings is, I submit, forced, not an internal resolution but an imposed resolution. Maybe it's more accurate to say that it's an imposed irresolution.

In Breslin's account, the paintings are about freedom and its absence, about stability and instability. The rectangles, he writes, "provide a reassuring *stability* for the amorphousness of inner life," they "participate in the flux which they contain." This could very well be what Rothko had in mind, yet the literalness of the metaphor points straight to the limited expressive possibilities of Rothko's "format." If soft edges are equated with amorphousness, if hazy rectangles fitted into the rectangle of the canvas signify stability within amorphousness—then the paintings, which are all composed of hazy-edged rectangles, are all one thing. Emotionally, Rothko has one note. The abstract expressionists often sought emotional intensity through structural simplicity. It was an old modern idea that they carried to perhaps unprecedented extremes. And it was only natural to see how far one could go in paring things down. Still, the life work of Rothko—and Still, Reinhardt, Newman, Kline and some others—raises the question of why the artist was never provoked by the equally natural desire to complicate things. Even Mondrian, the greatest simplifier in modern art, ultimately felt the need to complicate everything (which was part of the point of *Broadway Boogie Woogie*).

In recent decades, visitors to various exhibitions of works by the abstract expressionists have found themselves thinking that the work is repetitious, but this is by no means a new response. The critic Max Kozloff, who was in his 20s at the time of Rothko's show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1961, wrote that the Rothkos "have been received immediately as the most problematical works shown this year." While Kozloff's was not a negative review, he did believe that the show was overhung: "the separate paintings are not served by the abundant presence of their own kind." Kozloff seems to have been put off by what he called "the rhetoric of an exhibition that has literally covered all walls in an attempt to impose a Rothko cosmology upon the viewer. In this respect, a single one of the mature paintings will do as much." As for the darkest, most recent work, Kozloff found that these were "invisible paintings." "Rothko has found himself, temporarily, one hopes, in an expressive dilemma." Another review of the show, by the sculptor Sidney Geist in the little magazine *Scrap*, made some of the same points, but in much stronger terms. (Neither Kozloff's nor Geist's review is quoted in Breslin's biography.) Geist complained about the "dim illumination," and

> an ambition that is ultimately bureaucratic and thought-controlling in its nature.... The paintings seem to say, Don't examine, don't question, just submit.... Rothko has created an art which points to himself and to himself alone, and which, as far as Art is concerned, leaves no way out, admits of no alternatives and has no future—not even for him.

Rothko's paintings, which are up-front and impassive, surely inspire respect more easily than they repay curiosity; and if Breslin sounds awed rather than engaged by them, that may only confirm, so far as he is concerned, the artist's pre-eminence. Geist said that the paintings ask one to "submit," and Breslin has submitted. Rothko's paintings do have a certain authority, but it is of a guarded, heavily armored variety; and in Breslin's book all the drama goes on around the paintings, which, as American icons, are immune to any analysis that might reveal weakness. And since Breslin regards the paintings as beyond doubt, it follows that he can only regard Rothko's doubts about them as symptoms of his craziness. Breslin uses Rothko's mixed reactions to his retrospective at the Modern as a set piece to open his book. He describes the hours between the black tie opening and an early morning visit to a friend as marking a progression "from stage fright through elation to humiliating despair." Breslin treats these violently conflicting emotions psychologically, and that is no doubt appropriate. What is not made clear enough is that Rothko must have been aware that some of his contemporaries had doubts about his work, and that this awareness would leave a sensitive, self-aware person such as Rothko, whether stable or unstable, with complicated feelings. Whether the repetitiveness of Rothko's work was the result of the best laid plans or a spectacular loss of nerve, it obviously suggested to many of Rothko's contemporaries that he was staking out his territory, with the concomitant message to other artists: do not trespass. If this is how some people felt in 1961, how much more possible it would have been to feel that way a decade later, when there were so many more Rothkos, though it was perhaps harder to entertain doubts when his reputation had hardened into a bland, irrefutable greatness.

Breslin observes that the retrospective at the Modern was Rothko's "last one-man show in New York during his lifetime." Although Rothko was not yet 60 years old, he seemed to want to adopt the position of an aging artist who could no longer be bothered with the regular rhythms of exhibiting and being reviewed, and preferred to devote himself to grand, summing-up projects. Already in the late '50s Rothko had accepted a commission to design a series of mural-scaled paintings for the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building on Park Avenue, and although he ultimately bowed out of the project because of his ambivalence about creating decor for a place where rich people were going to eat, it was the prelude to several major mural commissions of the '60s, first at Harvard and later in Houston, where he created what was originally

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meant to be a Catholic chapel at the behest of John and Dominique de Menil. In taking on the Four Seasons project, Rothko was quite consciously announcing his desire to be a player in New York's boom times, when Park Avenue was being transformed from a venerable residential thoroughfare into the city's premier commercial district, and the old Bauhaus vision of a glass-and-metal metropolis was becoming an American reality. In the later Houston chapel Rothko was making his own contribution to a revival of interest in religious feeling that had inspired a *Partisan Review* symposium on "Religion and the Intellectuals" way back in 1950. In that symposium, Clement Greenberg made a statement that is relevant to the work Rothko did more than a decade later, when he spoke of poets "who cannot feel safe in the practice of their art unless its lack of logical consistency receives the sanction of some all-embracing, extra-aesthetic authority, such an authority as would hold good for more than simply art." The later years of Rothko's life, when he seemed to be reaching for ever grander statements even as he retreated more and more into the privacy of his studio, would make a wonderful story if only the work had the arresting, summary power that one associates with the great, late styles. Breslin is perhaps at his most energetic when he's making a case for Rothko's darkly bland later compositions. His long discussion of the Houston chapel, which he describes as "a large, hollow space, in which you are free to move, surrounded or perhaps dominated by fourteen large, empty canvases," fills the emptiness, all right: with touchy-feely metaphysics.

Breslin rarely knows when enough is enough, yet he does have the good taste to spare readers the aftermath of Rothko's suicide—the hideous machinations of the big shots at the Marlborough Gallery and the lawsuits that proved that Rothko's friends in his later years were no friends at all and had done their damnedest to bilk his children out of what was rightfully theirs. The suicide is not, however, quite the end, for Breslin adds a rather lengthy afterword, in which he drops the biographer's mask and composes a bit of autobiography, the story of the seven years it took to write the book. He describes the hours in the libraries, the interesting interviews, his visits to Russia and New York City, where in "a beautiful art deco building" on Central Park West he met Milton Avery's widow, Sally. As Breslin describes what seems like his thorough enjoyment of the round of appointments—he even tells us about his "new Yves Saint Laurent overcoat, gray wool scarf, black leather gloves and briefcase bursting with tape recorders"—he sounds like the opposite of the irascible Rothko.

Breslin's afterword is probably meant to assure us that, although his subject is something of a maniac, he is himself a reasonable man. I wonder, though, if an entirely reasonable person can ever understand New York, a city of obsessions that only reveals its secrets to those who are themselves obsessed. Obsession is a conundrum: no one can be an artist without it, but in itself it assures nothing, and it can, under certain circumstances, be an artist's undoing. Breslin regards Rothko's mood swings, rages and manias with careful sympathy; the artist is a monument that he dutifully surveys. Breslin says that he identifies with what he considers Rothko's midlife crisis because he's had one, too, but empathy is not the same thing as comprehension. Breslin does not mind representing himself as a visitor to the art world, and he is also, despite the seven years he spent on the book, a tourist in relation to Rothko and his work. He enjoys Rothko's softly opulent imagery, just as he enjoys the architecture of Central Park West on a winter day, but he is too much the tourist to consider what's behind those elegant facades. In spite of all the research, the book merely ratifies a received judgment. Breslin goes to Houston, finds the

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chapel to be a "hollow space" and the canvases to be "empty," but he doesn't notice that anything is missing. This enveloping emptiness is turned into fullness through a rather stunning leap of the imagination that Breslin will credit to aesthetic experience, but that I think has more to do with academic rationalization. Breslin cannot believe that an artist as famous and as unhappy as Rothko could have failed. After living with the terrible thought of Rothko's slashed arteries for seven long years, Breslin is pleased to include this afterword that amounts to a fourteen-page sigh of relief.

JED PERL's most recent book is *Gallery Going: Four Seasons in the Art World* (Harcourt Brace). He is at work on *New Art City*, a study of art in Manhattan between 1950 and 1970.

Continental Drift

BY JACOB HEILBRUNN

In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent by Timothy Garton Ash

(Random House, 688 pp., $27.50)

The German Revolution of 1989: Causes and Consequences edited by Gert-Joachim Glaessner and Ian Wallace

(Berg, 256 pp., $57)

Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification by A. James McAdams

(Princeton University Press, 250 pp., $35)

In 1830 Goethe lamented to Eckermann that the Germans possessed "no city ... nay, no country of which we could decidedly say: *Here is Germany.*" Today it is easy to forget that for centuries no such thing as "Germany" existed, only a hodgepodge of states and principalities that served as a convenient battleground for the great powers. Tenuously united by the Holy Roman Empire and lingering memories of their own medieval empire, the Germans were bedeviled by an unresolved tension between fragmentation and the aspiration for unity. Indeed, from the collapse of the medieval empire to the present, the most persistent theme of German history has been nothing less than a divisive search for a national identity in Central Europe.

Despite the common feeling of nationhood engendered by the wars of liberation against Napoleon from 1813-1815, German particularism never went away. The Germans fell to squabbling over the precise form that unity should take. The first opportunity for peaceful unity based on popular sovereignty came during the revolution of 1848. It was squandered in part by liberal nationalists feuding over a *Grossdeutschelösung* or a *Kleindeutschelösung*, a federal Germany stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic or a lesser Germany that excluded Austria.

After the Prussian king Frederick William IV refused to "pick up the crown of Germany from the gutter" in 1848, Bismarck supplied the answer to the national question. There would be no nonsense about popular sovereignty or union with Austria. Under Bismarck's direction, Prussia launched and won successive wars with Denmark, Austria and France. The result was the creation of a Prussian-led nation-state in 1870, which used nationalism and militarism to paper over Germany's old religious and regional cleavages. When Bismarck became imperial chancellor, he appeared before the Reichstag only in military uniform: Prussian blue tunic, spiked helmet and black cavalry boots extending over the thigh.

Still, imperial Germany was initially what Bismarck termed a "satiated" power devoted to preserving the European status quo. The transfer of the capital of Europe from Vienna or Paris to Berlin was widely viewed as a stabilizing force. "For us there is no loss, rather a gain," the British statesman Lord Stanley could declare, "in the interposition of a solid barrier between the two great aggressive powers of the continent." The problem was that Bismarck's intricate continental system of interlocking alliances depended entirely on Bismarck as the railway yardmaster. "Our policy with its criss-cross of commitments ... resembles the tangle of tracks at a big railway station," wrote Bismarck's aide Friedrich von Holstein in 1887, "and Bismarck thinks he can click everything into its proper place and hopes particularly that the greater the confusion, the more indispensable he is."

When the impetuous young Kaiser Wilhelm dismissed Bismarck three years later, however, Germany went off the rails. The stern Prussian virtues embodied by Bismarck degenerated into the arrogance and swagger of Wilhelmine Germany. Bismarck had unwittingly laid the tracks for his epigones' bid for hegemony in Central Europe in World War I; and Hitler's creation of a Greater Germany in World War II seemed to confirm the lesson that the European state system that had contained Spanish, Austrian and French attempts at hegemony was utterly incapable of containing the Bismarckian state created in 1870.

In the postwar era Germany's reversion to its original state of fragmentation and division seemed to provide the solution to the German problem. Among the high priests of international relations theory, it became an article of faith that the unprecedented dismemberment of Germany and Europe between the Soviet Union and the United States was the precondition for European "structural" stability. Anton DePorte's *Europe Between the Superpowers* gave the classic statement of this dogma: "The problem of German power, which had destroyed the old system, has been resolved by the cold war more securely and lastingly than it was likely to have been in any other way, including even an agreement by the superpowers soon after 1945 either to divide or reunite Germany."

Far from marking a caesura in German history, however, partition marked a return to the past. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) did not abandon its search for a place in Central Europe. It renewed that search by pursuing *Ostpolitik*, or détente with the East. Unlike East Germany, the FRG was not merely an object of the cold war, it was also one of its subjects.

The intellectual confusion surrounding the division of Germany had its sources in a fundamental misreading of

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the East-West conflict. Two camps developed during the cold war, but not because the two superpowers subjugated the nations of the continent between them after the Great Patriotic War. On the contrary, all of the European nations faced the same threat from the same superpower. The Soviet Union, not the Soviet Union and the United States, carved up Europe.

The weird equivalence drawn between the opposing *imperia* of East and West fostered an artificial sense of stability during the time of the cold war, not only because it overlooked West German efforts to overcome the continental divide, but also because it ignored the ease with which the Soviet Union could unify the continent unilaterally by withdrawing from Eastern Europe. The aim of *Ostpolitik* was to convince the Kremlin that it could safely relax its iron grip on Eastern Europe. The exact extent to which *Ostpolitik* led to the dissolution of the evil empire may never be answered, but to trace German foreign policy toward the East is to uncover a neglected chapter in the resolution of the cold war.

What is more, *Ostpolitik*'s past is intimately linked to the German future. Germany is already beginning to develop a new *Ostpolitik* that can balance its interests in the West. Even the old question of German borders may not be settled for good. Germany's exposed location in the center remains the dominant problem of Central Europe. Just as a divided Germany was the key to a divided Europe, so a united Germany will be the key to a united Europe.

Who could be a better cicerone through this contested territory than Timothy Garton Ash? For more than two decades he has negotiated the byways and the backwaters of Central Europe with the greatest aplomb. In *The Uses of Adversity*, Garton Ash displayed an uncanny knack for the telling anecdote that conveys more than cold fact. With *The Magic Lantern*, his firsthand account of the East European revolutions, he rocketed to stardom as a kind of anti-Communist John Reed, chronicling the collapse rather than the origins of the Soviet empire.

Now, in *In Europe's Name*, Garton Ash has exchanged his blue jeans for a pipe and a smoking jacket. This is no breathless account of German affairs. It is a detailed examination of West Germany's approach to overcoming the "Yalta" division of the continent. Based on extensive reading of German and American sources, and on interviews with everyone from Helmut Kohl to Eduard Shevardnadze, Garton Ash's book provides an intelligent and robust survey of *Ostpolitik*. Like his Eastern European friends who have gone from working in the boiler room to working in the state room, Garton Ash has made the transition from journalist to historian.

It is rather like springing from a sputtering East German Trabant into a Mercedes; the journey is immeasurably smoother, but it loses some of its piquancy. For all his navigational skills, Garton Ash cannot quite disguise the fact that at a few crucial intersections he is not quite sure of his destination. Indeed, right from the outset he betrays some uncharacteristic hesitancy. He devotes two separate introductory chapters to setting German division in the context of the partition of Europe, and he circles around the question of whether *Ostpolitik* represented narrow German interests or European ones. Finally he gets to the three interlinked themes of *Ostpolitik*—relations with Moscow, East Berlin and Eastern Europe—and comes to a screeching halt in order to examine the problems posed by the ethnic Germans scattered across the lands east of the Oder and southeast of the Erz mountains. He then inspects at length the Social Democratic Party's (SPD) myopic approach to *Ostpolitik* in the 1980s. In his final chapter, and his best, Garton Ash returns to his initial question of whether a united Germany can reconcile its interests with European ones.

Despite the pious avowals of German statesmen from Willy Brandt to Hans-Dietrich Genscher that *Ostpolitik* was completely compatible with the ideal of a united Europe, German détente always had a hard core of national interest. From Bismarck to Hitler, the Germans had conducted *Schaukelpolitik*, or jockeying for advantage between East and West. The tug of national interests was present at the creation of West Germany. Konrad Adenauer, the prescient first chancellor of the FRG, was determined to anchor his state in the West, in the conviction that it would eventually serve as a magnet for East Germany. Adenauer's great rival, the socialist Kurt Schumacher, believed that the SPD, by championing social democracy, could bring the eastern zone into its orbit. Schumacher, a fierce anti-Communist and a survivor of Dachau, exhorted Germans in the West not to sacrifice their eastern brethren on the altar of an alliance with the West, and he advocated the creation of a neutral, unified Germany. Not until the late 1950s did the SPD officially accept the FRG's membership in NATO and its integration into the West.

Ironically, at the very moment that Schumacher's successors endorsed the FRG's western-oriented policies, Adenauer's pretense that Bonn could indefinitely suspend policy toward the East was shattered. Kennedy's and Macmillan's feeble responses to the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961, prompted Willy Brandt, then the mayor of Berlin and an ardent cold warrior, to recognize that the West was indifferent to the fate of East Germans. The erection of the Wall had paradoxical effects: it literally cemented the German-German border and allowed East Germany to begin talking of developing a distinct "GDR consciousness," but at the same time the GDR's new sense of security resulted in talks with West Germany, in the first cracks in the confrontation with Bonn.

Brandt's inauguration of détente with the Eastern bloc in 1969 was a monumental achievement. In 1970 the FRG affirmed the existing Eastern boundaries with the Soviet Union in the Moscow Treaty, and with Poland in the Warsaw Treaty. The 1971 Quadripartite

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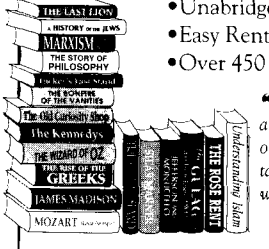

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Agreement regulated the status of West Berlin, and in 1973 West and East Germany were admitted to the United Nations. *Ostpolitik* rendered quaint the Polish leaders' warnings of "revanchist" forces in the FRG, atoned for Germany's crimes in the East and ended the long-standing isolation of East Germans. Sealing off East Germans from the West was essential to the GDR's existence; already in 1953 it had launched a campaign against *Ungeziefer* or "vermin" (the same term used by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* to describe the Jews) to clear out a five-kilometer defensive zone along the German-German border. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of *Ostpolitik* was its assumption that borders would become more porous if they were recognized. This helped prompt the Soviet Union to begin rethinking its traditional definition of security as coeval with the amount of territory it occupied in Europe.

The danger was that the Social Democratic Party began to confuse the formalization of relations with the GDR with normalization. The SPD steadily developed a will to believe in the East German Communist elite. In constantly repeating the refrain that the GDR was a strong, stable, improving state worthy of recognition, some politicians may have come to admire the GDR; Garton Ash speculates that others may even have succumbed to a diplomat's version of the Stockholm Syndrome, in which hostages come to identify with their captors, or at least show appreciation for their humanity. West German policymakers were not themselves hostages, but they were acutely aware that they were negotiating on behalf of the hostage city West Berlin and their brethren trapped in the GDR.

Garton Ash is rightly exercised by the SPD's embrace of Communist elites across Eastern Europe in the interests of stability, and by its shabby treatment of the dissidents struggling against those regimes. The word "normalization," he observes, was a key term for the social-liberal architects of *Ostpolitik* in the 1970s:

> For them it meant the restoration of a more "normal" relationship of the Federal Republic with the Soviet Union and East European states, starting with the elementary "normality" of diplomatic recognition. But "normalization" was also a key word in Czechoslovakia at that time, and what it meant there was the attempt to return a European society, initially by the use of force, to Soviet norms.

The strategy of the SPD was to foster gradual, deliberate change in Communist societies through mutual trust and cooperation. Since dissidents were a destabilizing force, it was necessary to ignore the democrats in order to support democracy. By the same token, the rise of Solidarity jeopardized German interests since it threatened German-German détente.

Once the SPD lost power in the elections of 1982, its embrace of *Ostpolitik* hit rock bottom. Garton Ash, who devotes an entire chapter to the SPD's "second *Ostpolitik*," reminds us how the party defined itself in opposition to the United States, and seized on the notion of *Mitteleuropa* as a "third way" that offered an escape from the superpower conflict. Brandt and his protégés insisted on the "de-ideologization" of East-West relations, demanded a chemical-free zone in Central Europe and signed a paper with the East German Communist Party (SED) on "Conflicting Ideologies and Common Security" that attempted to reconcile the capitalist with the socialist system. The SPD was forgetting a primary fact of political life: it was one party among others, but the SED was a dictatorial party-state.

Though the SPD was not in power during the 1980s, the significance of its ideological free-fall should not be underestimated. The East German Communists skillfully exploited the SPD's desire to present itself as the party best able to manage German-German relations. The SPD worked to shift the parameters of debate in Germany toward formal recognition of the GDR. It even attempted to close down a documentation center in Salzgitter that recorded human rights violations in the GDR. The rise of the New Left partisans promoted by Willy Brandt, who was the chairman of the SPD in the 1970s and 1980s, meant that Helmut Schmidt was toppled by the party in 1982 because of his firm anti-communism. Ironically, the party that had embraced unification in the '50s became so enamored of normalization that it responded to the actual reunification with sullen resignation and bewilderment. (Brandt himself was one of the few SPD leaders to grasp the momentous character of the events of 1989.) The SPD's embrace of moral equivalence between East and West and pseudo-pacifism back in the 1970s continued right on to 1991, when the German Left lashed itself into a frenzy over the prospect of a war in the Gulf.

Kohl and Genscher may not have been able to overcome opposition to German participation in the Gulf war, but following Schmidt's fall in 1982 they pursued a more moderate version of *Ostpolitik* and reaffirmed the FRG's commitment to the Western alliance. Whatever Kohl's and Genscher's failings, the importance of their actions can hardly be exaggerated. The outcome of the cold war, you might even say, was decided in 1983.

Amazingly, Garton Ash barely mentions Kohl's and Genscher's contribution to the event that set the stage for Gorbachev's and Shevardnadze's introduction of "new thinking" into Soviet foreign policy: the Euromissile crisis of 1983. The Kremlin had sought to pursue a limited détente at the same time as an arms buildup; this two-track strategy was aimed at realizing its cherished goal of detaching West Germany from NATO. Brezhnev and Andropov waged an intense propaganda war against the emplacement of new cruise missiles in Germany, and interfered in German elections on behalf of the SPD. As Jeffrey Herf observed in his splendid book *War By Other Means* (1991), this Soviet effort attests to the importance that the Kremlin attached to blocking deployment. Western resolve in the face of crude Soviet threats played a major role in fueling the collapse of Communist power in the East, and missile deployment was a critical turning point. Had the Kremlin impeded deployment, it would have had little incentive to alter its foreign policy. The Kremlin's defeat, coupled with a stagnating economy and the failure of the Red Army to crush the mujahedin, smoothed the path for reformers to embark on the internal transformation of the Soviet Union.

Garton Ash, who focuses on the dissidents as a kind of intellectual vanguard, scants Gorbachev's contribution to undermining the Soviet empire. But to acknowledge Gorbachev's key role is not to diminish the bravery of the dissidents in Eastern Europe. Nowhere did Gorbachev play a more important part than in subverting the Warsaw Pact member with the fewest dissidents, East Germany. Gorbachev's rise, in sum, was the hinge of fate for the East German gerontocrats. Gorbachev and the reform circles around him recognized that the Eastern bloc had become an economic dinosaur. In fact, two of Gorbachev's most important advisers, Alexander Yakovlev and Valentin Falin, viewed the West German social market economy as a possible model for the Eastern bloc. By 1988, Soviet foreign policy experts were decrying the "ideological primitivism" of the GDR and portraying it as an obstacle to close economic and political relations with West Germany. So incensed was the GDR by a Soviet foreign policy expert's

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remark at the Soviet embassy in Bonn that the Berlin Wall was "a relic of the cold war" that it banned him from traveling to the country! Gorbachev himself signaled a fundamental change of direction at the Central Committee Plenum of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1988, when he spoke of the right of every people and every country to "choose freely its social and political system." The more briskly the winds of change blew from the East, the more stubbornly Honecker and company hid behind the ramparts of old-fashioned Stalinism.

As Martin McCauley astutely points out in the excellent collection of essays *The German Revolution of 1989*, glasnost and perestroika revived the SED's old nightmare: that the CPSU could exist without the SED, but the SED could not do without the CPSU. From start to finish, the "workers and peasants state" was the ward of the Kremlin. The true threat to the regime came from the East rather than from the West. Because the GDR, unlike the FRG, never succeeded in achieving a significant measure of independence from its superpower sponsor, the regime had no room to maneuver.

Why, then, did the collapse of the regime come as such a surprise? James McAdams's thorough if plodding *Germany Divided* offers a superb example of the view that confused the treatment of the GDR as a viable state with the conferring of legitimacy. Yes, the GDR was "treated as a viable state by all of the countries surrounding it, including its principal rival, the Federal Republic of Germany." But this hardly made it a legitimate state in the eyes of its own captive population or the Soviet Union. In relying on interviews with high-ranking East German officials, McAdams totally ignores the plight of ordinary East Germans. The GDR was never a "viable" state nor a real "rival" of the FRG: it was a satrapy that the Kremlin could bargain away and its citizens could overthrow.

In fact, during the fortieth anniversary celebrations of its rule, the SED confronted the unprecedented threat of the Kremlin encouraging the East German population to revolt. In June 1953 Soviet tanks crushed a spontaneous uprising. Thirty-six years later, after viewing a military parade accompanied by Prussian military music, Gorbachev told the East Germans, "If you want democracy, take it and it will be yours." This was an extraordinary declaration to make in the land of "real existing socialism." It amounted to stating that all SED claims about democracy in the GDR were false. Indeed, it implied that the population should oppose the SED. The rush to unity was triggered by the Soviet Union.

So the key to reunification did not lie in Bonn or East Berlin. It lay in Moscow. The Soviet Union promoted the unification of Germany after 1945 while Adenauer refused to contemplate unity for fear that communism would extend to the banks of the Rhine. Not until 1955 did Khrushchev accept the reality of two German states. By 1990 communism was no longer a threat, the FRG was a prosperous welfare state and Gorbachev stabbed Honecker in the back. The great accomplishment of *Ostpolitik* was that it allowed Gorbachev to envision a new Europe marked by ever intensifying competition. Certainly Gorbachev believed that Gorbachevs would pop up all over Eastern Europe and follow a third way between capitalism and communism. One of the unintended virtues of *Ostpolitik*, Garton Ash argues, was that it lulled Gorbachev into a false sense of security concerning the stability of the Eastern bloc. Gorbachev ended up losing the Soviet empire and reunifying Germany. Where the GDR was the junior partner to Moscow, Germany has now become senior partner to Russia.

With a weakened Russia, Germany should have little competition as it seeks to create a new *Mitteleuropa* that reflects its economic and security interests. The rise in German power will be no threat to the United States because Germany will serve as a buffer against Russia. Much of its policy toward the East, in any case, will be driven by domestic considerations. As part of its new *Ostpolitik*, the FRG signed separate treaties with Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia limiting the number of refugees that can enter Germany. The unilateral recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence, which was prompted by the desire to extend the right of self-determination that the Germans exercised in 1989, offered another sign of a new German assertiveness. Where the Bonn Republic pursued its interests by submerging them in NATO and the European Community, the new Federal Republic will pursue them openly.

The result will be the creation of a German-led *Mitteleuropa*. In the 1980s both the left and the right were enchanted by this dream. During the Euromissile crisis, the left explicitly warned that Germany would become the victim of a "nuclear holocaust" unless a Central Europe independent of the superpowers emerged. The right attempted during the *Historikerstreit* to

Sonogram

Something of desk work and pornography,
through succulences of conducting gel.
Vector: creation (in a partial view),

held in the half-dark of the examination room,
just as a wishbone of base mineral
holds pomegranate seed or emerald

or alveolus in a narthex rose.
God's image lies couched safe in blood and matter,
where an ionic snow falls lightly, hushed,

into the deep calm of the body's gulf.
The channel-changer skates . . . tiny hot springs
of the beating heart, or sinuses of thought

like Siracusa's limestone quarries, where
an army of seven thousand starved to death.
The world of line and measure somewhat darkly

honors you in this glass, child: all your hands
will make, all your body will savor,
your mind consider, or your heart regret,

seeking your whole life for such latency.

KARL KIRCHWEY

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transform Germany—and the Third Reich—into a victim of geography by contending that its historical mission had always been to fend off the barbarian hordes from the East. Andreas Hillgruber even argued that the European tragedy was that the United States and Russia prevented Germany from establishing a *Mitteleuropa*, thereby consigning Europe to political impotence. Most recently, as Garton Ash notes, the eminent political scientist Arnulf Baring has called for a "new colonization, an *Ostkolonisation*."

These sentiments will hardly assuage East European fears, but Germany is not condemned to repeat the past. To indulge in such geopolitical determinism would be to confirm the arguments espoused by the old German nationalists that democracy is alien to Germany. The original conception of *Mitteleuropa*, after all, was propounded by the liberal-nationalist Friedrich Naumann, who pleaded in 1915 for tolerance and understanding of Germany's eastern neighbors. The notion of a Central Europe under German leadership fell into abeyance until 1933 when it was revived and perverted by the Nazis. Now the first peaceful German revolution has given the Germans a second chance to demonstrate that a single, democratic German nation-state can strike a balance between self-assertion and self-effacement in Central Europe.

The Germans will no longer be able to cloak their own interests behind the comforting platitude of European interests. The supine indifference of Germany's E.C. partners to the Bosnian tragedy has exposed (among other things) the myth of European unity. It looks sometimes as though the only thing uniting Europe is atavistic hatred. "Germany" may have taken centuries to re-emerge, but "Europe" has never been more than a mere geographical expression. The capital of the continent has returned to Berlin.

JACOB HEILBRUNN is University Fellow at the Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University.

After Bigotry

BY TAMAR JACOBY

The Scar of Race
by Paul M. Sniderman and Thomas Piazza

(Harvard University Press, 212 pp., $18.95)

Of all the problems surrounding race, few are more immediate or more important than the difficulty of talking about it. The old story of the Moynihan Report captures the tragedy best: in 1965 a young Labor Department official identified the breakdown of the family as the root of what ailed the inner-city ghetto, but for decades this seminal idea was taboo because it struck well-intentioned people as racist. Even today, many blacks and whites hesitate to talk about ghetto pathology (they even resent the term) and refuse to consider the consequences of many of the programs that have been put forward in the name of black progress.

Social scientists such as Paul M. Sniderman and Thomas Piazza are unlikely giant-killers, but their book could help clear the way for a more honest discussion. Their central thesis is that race issues are political issues, much like other political issues—taxes, say, or intervention abroad—about which reasonable people may disagree. This was not always the case. In the late '50s and early '60s, race was a moral issue. There was a right side and a wrong side. The views of many whites were dictated largely by stereotypes, and those who diverged from the liberal consensus were anything but reasonable—they were racists. It was a simpler time, with simpler choices, and less discussion was needed (or so it was thought) of what had to be done. In the mid-'60s, even as racial matters grew more tangled, liberals clung stubbornly to the old moral categories; and so they found themselves unable to talk about real problems.

Sniderman and Piazza are hardly the first to remark upon this impasse. Still, they have a significant advantage over others who have called for a more open debate. They are not polemical essayists. They do not merely appeal for change, they report the results of opinion surveys, which is to say, they come with evidence to suggest that the old moral assumptions are misleading. Not only is out-and-out bigotry very much on the wane in America, they demonstrate, but many people who oppose seemingly pro-black policies do so for legitimate reasons: not because they are racist, but because they doubt that the policies will work.

The Scar of Race makes a highly technical case, intricately argued and freighted with statistical data. Skeptical of liberal *and* conservative assumptions, its authors see it as their task to complicate. They offer grist for pessimists as well as optimists, and even their central point, about the declining influence of prejudice, is far from unequivocal. Taken as a whole, however, this slim book should go a long way to demystify the way Americans think about race.

A political scientist and a pollster, Sniderman and Piazza rely principally on five opinion surveys conducted between 1986 and 1991. This rather limited data base is, to be sure, cause for some skepticism about their findings. Whites' answers to pollsters' questions about blacks are notoriously suspect—they are even less reliable than other kinds of survey data—and it is simply impossible for readers unschooled in the technicalities of statistics and sampling to judge the elaborate, state-of-the-art methods used here.

Still, Sniderman and Piazza are reassuringly alive to the possibility of error. They back up their own findings with data from the country's most authoritative social science pollsters, the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago. What's more, confounding the expectations of virtually everyone in the business, their techniques prove sensitive and accurate enough to pick up very mixed feelings among whites about blacks. Combining new research techniques—their computer tailors different lines of questioning to different respondents—with an unusually subtle understanding of racial issues, they fashion an impressive array of numbers into a detailed and often startling portrait of white attitudes.

Among their principal findings is that race is not one issue, but many. In the past, whites were either against blacks or for them—"sympathetic to Negroes as a group," one classic study of public opinion put it—but now most people think in nuanced and newly sophisticated ways about particular policies, about specific means to specific ends. Whites who oppose busing, for example, would not necessarily oppose a black in the White House or a black

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working-class family in subsidized housing across the street. Sniderman and Piazza make sense of this set of responses by sorting the policies to which whites are reacting into three broad categories: government efforts to ensure equal treatment of blacks (whether in school, housing, the polling place or elsewhere), government social spending to improve life in the ghetto, and race-conscious policies like affirmative action. Each of these three different "agendas" is governed by a different set of rules and assumptions, and the factors influencing people's views vary widely from issue to issue.

On all three issues, the authors find, stereotypes about blacks play some part, but in a very different way than is commonly assumed. On most questions, the political ideology of white respondents is more important than their perceptions of black people. Conservatives are more likely than liberals to oppose government spending for black people, but this reflects mainly their attitude toward the role of government, not their attitude toward race: the same conservative is even more likely to oppose public assistance for an unemployed white person than for a black one. Ideology can affect whites' views of race policy in direct and indirect ways, shaping their basic notions of fairness as well as their views about government spending. Education also plays an important part in determining attitudes, but not simply because more education correlates with less racial prejudice: more educated whites are also more influenced by political ideas, thus amplifying the role of ideology and diminishing the relevance of race per se. Most striking of all, Sniderman and Piazza find that whites' views of racial matters, on everything but affirmative action, are remarkably pliable, not fixed in hardened prejudice but open to persuasion.

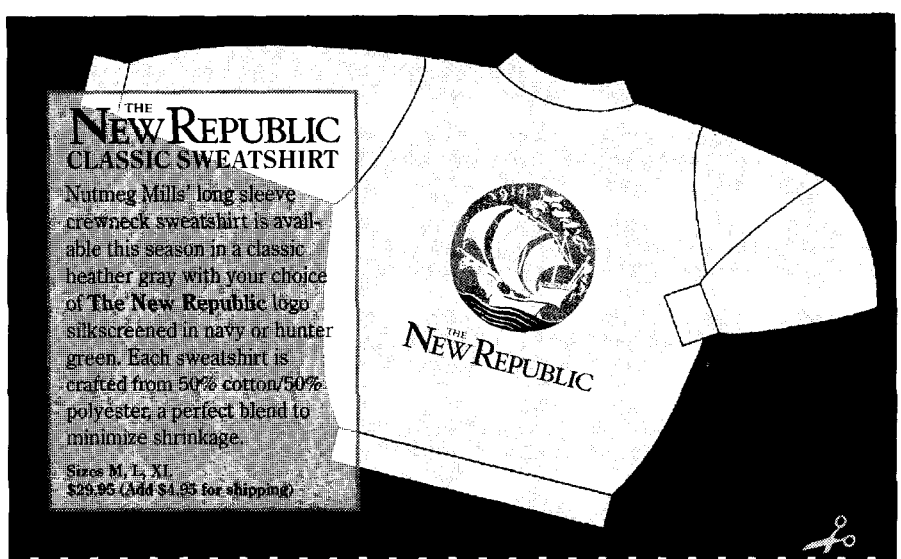
Simple as they sound, these findings could change the shape of the debate about race. The scalding charge of "racism" will not disappear, but it should no longer be able to stop debate dead. Stalemate could give way to constructive argument, as more and more people understand that there may be legitimate reasons—attitudes toward government intervention, say, or the calculation of costs and benefits—to oppose even the most appealing-sounding of racial policies. Most important, damaging as prejudice has been in the past, we can begin to move forward now, knowing that it is losing its grip. As Sniderman and Piazza write hopefully, "New majorities can be made—and unmade. The future is not foreordained. It is the business of politics to decide it."

Just how credible is their argument about the ebb of bigotry? If anything, it may not go far enough. Sniderman and Piazza's picture of prejudice is a complex one, at once reassuring and disturbing. As they point out, many pollsters have found in recent years that rank and unembarrassed racism has largely disappeared from white America. Spurred by skeptics who said that racism had merely gone underground, Sniderman and Piazza were determined to probe deeper: to isolate out-and-out bigotry, to measure it, to investigate its ideological roots and to chart the ways in which people disguise their negative feelings.

Much of their data reinforced the hopeful message of earlier pollsters. Having determined early on that most people are quite willing to tell researchers exactly what they find objectionable about other ethnic groups, Sniderman and Piazza conclude that there probably is very little "underground," unmeasurable bigotry. The measurement itself is somewhat trickier, and the two pollsters use a variety of gauges: the degree of white support for policies to help blacks, the degree of nuance in white thinking about these policies, the number of negative stereotypes held by a given respondent, the consistency of his or her negative feelings, the correlation between any consistent anti-black feeling and consistent anti-Semitism.

After considering all these measures, the authors determine unequivocally that hard-core racism is disappearing. Just fifteen years ago, 23 percent of whites thought that blacks were born with less ability; now only 6 percent say they think so. Virtually no respondent, liberal or conservative, would give less government help to an unemployed black worker than to an unemployed white one. At the same time Sniderman and Piazza found that large numbers of whites still hold negative stereotypes of blacks, and most make no effort at all to disguise their opinions. Large numbers of respondents (61 percent) told the pollsters that most blacks on welfare could get a job, that blacks could do better if they tried harder (43 percent), that black neighborhoods are run down (42 percent), that blacks have a chip on their shoulder (36 percent).

Is this racial prejudice? Some will say that it is, and will call Sniderman and Piazza apologists for drawing a distinction between those whom they dub prejudiced people, who cling to one or two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stereotypes, and out-and-out bigots, who consistently and systematically think ill of those who are different. But other readers may wonder if Sniderman and Piazza have erred in the other direction, designating as "stereotypes" and "prejudice" what are in fact reactions to events and positions taken in recent decades—to black political stances, to the unintended consequences of civil rights policies, to the image that blacks project in the news and popular culture and so on. In the 1950s, whites' views of the few blacks they met were indeed determined largely by prejudgments about innate racial characteristics. Today, after thirty years of contentious racial politics, a black-white encounter triggers very different reactions—just as hostile, perhaps, but not necessarily determined by primitive responses to color.

Is dependence on welfare a problem in the black community? Are many black neighborhoods neglected and dangerous? Are blacks resentful of whites, and sometimes confrontational? As Sniderman and Piazza thoughtfully point out, each of the stereotypes can be traced to "a kernel of truth." What's more, at least as many blacks as whites express these and other negative generalizations about their race. No one wants to overlook or to apologize for prejudice, and Sniderman and Piazza are surely correct in their basic point: even whites who would like to think well of blacks and treat them fairly harbor all kinds of half-conscious and poisonous preconceptions. No honest white can pretend otherwise. But it also serves no one, black or white, to make the charge of bigotry where there is none, or to make it impossible to talk, however carefully, about the problems of the black community.

In many cases, this is a hard call, as one example makes clear. The most common of all the white generalizations unearthed by Sniderman and Piazza was "a perception of a lack of effort and responsibility" on the part of blacks. "If blacks would only try harder," 43 percent of whites felt, "they would be as well-off as whites." The prejudiced assumptions that could lie behind this statement hardly need to be made explicit, but does that mean that everyone who says this is a racist? Some people who agree with the statement also recognize the disadvantages blacks face: a majority of those polled acknowledge the devastating legacy of past oppression, and a full two-thirds believe that blacks are still, today, getting "less of the good things in life than they deserve."

To think that blacks could be trying harder, then, is not necessarily to blame them for their predicament. Americans who think that blacks as a group will soon be "as well off as whites" are obviously ignorant of a great many things—from the levels of black education to the condition of the cities. But that does not make them racist, and it does not undercut the wisdom of those who urge blacks to push harder in the face of the adversity that persists. Nor does the belief that blacks could make more effort automatically lead whites to withhold government aid: sizable numbers of conservatives and liberals alike are willing to help even an "undependable" black worker.

Even more delicate questions surround what Sniderman and Piazza call the "kernel of truth" in the generalization about black effort. What are whites to make of young blacks who feel that doing well in school—what they call "acting white"—is despicable? How is one to understand what even the most empathetic observers of ghetto life describe as its "culture of failure"? And might it not be easy for whites to misinterpret the charge, put forward by blacks of all classes, that most, if not all, of their problems are the white man's fault, and so it is for the white man to make amends? Sniderman and Piazza assume that the negative generalizations of whites about blacks are generalizations about the black race. Generalizations they clearly are, and as such they ought to be suspect. But perhaps they are generalizations about contemporary black attitudes rather than about race. Surely many whites, when they talk about blacks as a group, are reacting to black rhetoric and the orthodoxies of black politics. It is hard to deny that many black spokesmen have adopted a tone that suggests "a chip on the shoulder." And surely there is a political truth behind whites' perception of black effort: in contrast to thirty years ago, when most blacks saw the obstacles they faced as a challenge to try harder, now many younger blacks see them as an argument for not trying at all.

Sniderman and Piazza are not entirely blind to a new political environment in which color-coded policy arguments, rather than prejudices as such, widen the divide between black and white. They document strikingly how the mere mention of affirmative action nearly doubles the level of anti-black feeling expressed by whites. Ordinarily, some 26 percent of whites find that blacks tend to be irresponsible; but remind them in passing of affirmative action, and the number jumps to 43 percent. "A number of whites," the authors write, "dislike the idea of affirmative action so much and perceive it to be so unfair that they have come to dislike blacks as a consequence.... Wishing to close the racial divide in America we have widened it."

This is a devastating finding, stark and unmistakable in its implications for policy. But why doesn't it occur to Sniderman and Piazza to pursue this startling clue further and look into some of the other ways that racial politics aggravate prejudice? Astute as they are, their book remains finally a report from the laboratory, filled with telling numbers but unable to capture the full story of the way in which blacks and whites can bring out the worst in each other.

No book about race can hope to cover everything, but some of the points made in this book only highlight what is left out of it. The most glaring omission is any extended study of black attitudes. As Sniderman and Piazza might themselves note, not since the 1950s have white attitudes alone been the determining factor in race relations. But like a marriage counselor who meets with only one spouse, Sniderman and Piazza measure only white bigotry and ignore equally corrosive black anger.

The book's discussion of changing white attitudes, thoughtful and suggestive as it is, also leaves out an important part of the picture. Much to their own surprise, the authors discovered a remarkable pliability in white respondents: a single weak counterargument from a pollster sufficed to reverse many whites' positions on matters as fundamental as government spending in the ghetto. More startling still, one reason for this flexibility turns out to be that many whites have given little thought to racial questions and have no real views of them, as they have no real views of many other political matters.

This is an extremely interesting finding, and it supports the authors' thesis that race is a political issue. But surely this is not the full story of racial change in America. As the authors point out, the last thirty years have brought a fundamental shift in white attitudes—not just a little waffling under pressure but a full 180-degree turn. What exactly was the cause of this revolution? Was it due to more exposure to the other race? How important was the power of legal sanction? How much was moral pressure exerted by the national climate of opinion? However ignorant, muddled and just plain indifferent white Americans are to the problems of the poor other, there is no denying that the civil rights era brought a sea change—a rev-

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olution in awareness and in the general level of good will. The authors' discussion of white flexibility makes a good start but stops far short of the practical lessons they could teach us about how to encourage racial tolerance in a contentious and confused democratic nation.

So where do we go from here? Where do Sniderman and Piazza's numbers point? Most clearly, their data call for a fundamental reconsideration of affirmative action. Surely we can devise a way to create expanded opportunities for blacks and women without sowing ill will and giving new life to stereotypes. Their findings also make plain the need for improved education of whites and blacks: the single most powerful tool for reducing prejudice and discrimination. On the question of government spending in the ghetto, however, the lessons are cloudier. As Sniderman and Piazza point out, this remains the least settled area of racial policy, with large numbers of whites unsure of where they stand and often muddled in their thinking. But if Sniderman and Piazza are right, if prejudice really is abating and racial issues are the stuff of politics, it ought to be possible now, at least, to have a serious debate about healing the ghetto.

This revitalization of politics, of course, is not going to solve America's problem with race. Quite apart from old-fashioned prejudice, the public's fuzzy-mindedness and indifference will make it difficult to focus thought and money on this problem, as on many others. Old resentments will die slowly among both blacks and whites. Even when bigotry has been all but eradicated, issue-related gripes—about affirmative action, or the suburban reluctance to be taxed to help the inner city—are likely to continue to divide race from race almost as neatly as the color line did. In the coming years, as we grapple with those messy questions, we will long for the day when race seemed a clear-cut issue and moral suasion seemed to point the way to an obvious and just solution.

Honest discussion will make the issue more difficult for everyone, black and white, liberal and conservative. Instead of easy condescension, liberal whites will have to think about how to fix things—and what kind of sacrifices that requires from them. Instead of quick anger and glib blame, blacks will have to learn to forge alliances. And conservative whites who find it easy to shrug off the ghetto's claims when they are put forward by black demagogues will have to face the hard question of what the nation owes its disadvantaged. Not everyone will meet these challenges, and even the most honest discussions will founder. But surely even the messiest fight, if it is directed toward problem-solving, will be better than the arid standoff that has passed for a national debate about race.

TAMAR JACOBY is writing a book on the recent history of race relations.

Dark Magic

BY STANLEY KAUFFMANN

The Phantom Empire by Geoffrey O'Brien

(W.W. Norton, 286 pp., $20)

Geoffrey O'Brien is a happy prisoner, battering at the bars with the hope that they won't break. His book, awhirl with the force of his filmgoing experience, is a blend of protest and delight. He mixes a wish that film had never been born with a fanatical dependence on it. In short, he's a perfectly normal filmgoer but one who happens to understand his condition and can express it lyrically.

This is no surprise. O'Brien is a poet and film critic, whose work I've been reading since 1986. In that year I clipped from the *Voice* an article of his about John Ford that began:

> Back in my movie-ridden adolescence, when in company with a band of fellow obsessives, I shunted from double features to late late shows, life was given shape by directorial styles. There were Mizoguchi strolls in the park and Godard afternoons in coffee shops, Howard Hawks courtships and Nicholas Ray breakups. Parties, depending on mood, might be choreographed by Welles, von Sternberg or Vincente Minnelli; the mornings after were more frequently in the manner of Antonioni.... [John Ford's movies] however, affected us in quite a different way. They provided no models for style or behavior, no glimpses of what we might become—unless, that is, we wanted to become our own ancestors.

No wonder I looked forward to more O'Brien. No wonder I picked up his book eagerly.

The passage above predicted the enslavement that is his subject here. He begins his book with a fantasy about that old British rouser, *The Four Feathers*, about himself watching it. He parses the film into its precedents, its suggestiveness, its cultural echoes, its damned *persistence*. Then he says:

> You hit the OFF button. But you cannot "stop" *The Four Feathers* by so crude a maneuver. It persists along with the ten thousand other select favorites, a colony of barnacles, clinging to the underside of your visual memory. It's too late, or too soon, to turn off the images.

His life has been invaded: not only by the people in the film, but by the way he has been made to perceive them, by the way this perception makes him perceive his own existence. He has turned off the VCR; still, as he sits before the blank screen,

> the camera prowls around the room. This is how the eye works at the end of the twentieth century, after a hundred years of training. The camera slides through the doorway ... the surfaces flatten themselves into pictures as it goes by.

The entire book is a series of variations on this theme—"how the eye works at the end of the twentieth century," how, even when closed, it doesn't stop working because of film inundation. Those variations, in themselves inundating, are pretty generally brilliant.

O'Brien divides his book into eleven chapters in each of which he focuses, or tries to focus, on a theme. Two of them, "A Short History of Fun" and "Ghost Opera," cover something of the same territory, the development of film history—with two different emphases, the first more or less on fact, the second more or less on sensibility. In both of them his effusing memory and fantasy frequently overflow the banks of the proposed theme.

The chapter that develops most conventionally (though that's an odd word to use about this book) is "The Italian System." His focus here, for his scannings of cinema life, is the Cinecittà explosion in the 1950s, which was partly due to the postwar re-energizing of Italian film and partly to the film business's sudden need for material to combat T.V. Italy, which had actually originated film spectacle before World War I, could pro-

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duce spectacle again, and now with added layers of texture.

> The seductive charm of the Italian fantasy epics, as they infiltrated unsuspecting neighborhoods all over the world, was the experience of watching a movie that was not a "real" movie but rather a movie of a movie, in the same way that you might find yourself dreaming that you were dreaming.

And the basic, potent formula of these historical epics?

> All periods of history collapsed into one.... It was the final garage sale of Thrace and Carthage and Byzantium.... The assembly-line workers raked through what survived of the common fund of imagination, the ragged end-pieces of myth and fairy tale.... There would be no more local languages with their ancient associations and pungent proverbs, there would be only the indistinguishable dubbed voices: "Hey, Hercules, throw me a spear!"

As a former member of ELDA, the English Language Dubbers Association, in Rome, 1956, who spoke a bit of that pulpy dialogue as the screen before me billowed and bucked with galleons and chariots and bacchanals, I can attest to the sense of saturation by a Waring-blender outpouring of everything that had ever happened anywhere—in an attempt to reclaim for film, as against T.V., the audience's fantasy. (Ironically, many of those Italian *pasticci* ended up on late-night American T.V.)

My one reservation about O'Brien's jet-flights over film history is with his definition by decades. Yes, decades—the '40s, the '50s, the '60s—do have recognizable characteristics in dress and slang and mood, but film taxonomy is leaky. It's very easy to list numerous films in any decade that contradict its so-called definition.

Yet he is rhapsodic, not pedantic. It's amusing that at one point he notes that film scholars must be rational "to keep from being driven mad by the material they handle" and then continually dances around this warning with near-Orphic madness. It's a state to which he has been swept by even the cheapest films that have flooded into his head—particularly horror films.

But he is most certainly not that suspect creature, the intellectual who cares only for film trash. He knows very well, he reveres, the uppermost reaches of film. After talking about such works as *Ugetsu*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Orpheus* and *Ivan the Terrible*, he says, "Civilization could be defined as the areas within which there are theaters devoted exclusively to these movies." This is hyperbole, of course, but his whole vein is hyperbolic. Anyway, this statement is cheering to those of us who worry that civilization, altering while we sleep, may have slipped away by the time we wake unless such theaters exist as one of the means to hold it fast. O'Brien mentions several such theaters that he knows, or knew, calling them "temples whose enshrined saints" were the directors "who had made the camera an instrument for photographing the invisible."

One of the directors whose images recur most frequently in the book is Fritz Lang. This is oddly fitting because Lang images recur in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* and there is a basic linkage between Pynchon and O'Brien. O'Brien often writes with Pynchonesque sweep. Example (long because length is the only way to convey that sweep):

> You had been living for some time now in the composite world of *Blade Runner*.... Your destiny was to be the end product of the invention of the incandescent bulb. Night had been abolished. You ate, shopped and rented videos in BigTown, a full-service urban franchise offering twenty-four-hour cable service and banks of vending machines stocked with a wide range of outstanding consumer products: sodium-free tortilla chips, all-natural soft drinks, condoms, pornographic magazines and (on a lease-only basis) selected aerobic equipment. (BigTown is a registered trademark of Black Hole Enterprises, a fully licensed subsidiary of the InterGalactica Foundation.) After the harbor lights were rolled up for the evening, you bunked down inside a larger-than-life encephalogram.

One would expect that the author of those lines had passed through Pynchon and grown by it.

O'Brien closes his scintillating book by asking, "Will this empire indeed go on forever?... Wouldn't there be, after the glut of pictures, a deep craving for desertification?" Conceding the possibility, he conjures up people on the far side of that desert "three thousand years hence, watching *Intolerance* or *Bringing Up Baby* or *Rebel without a Cause*.... Those future movie buffs" would have changed drastically "just as you, watching a '30s movie, already paid less attention to story and jokes than to stray effects of lighting and brief glimpses of period furniture and costume." He conjectures that those future people "might be fascinated by earlier phases of evolution: vanished nuances of bone structure or nerve reflex, archaic vocal patterns...." He is almost jealous of those people, returning to the complexities of a film-furnished world.

The Phantom Empire will bring bitter comfort to the new Victorians of our day, who, along with their revived conservatism in everything from politics to sexual conduct, deplore the very existence of film as a corrupter of the sorts of judg-

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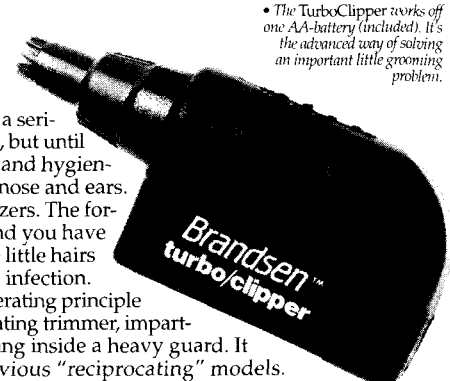

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ment and taste that existed before film was invented. O'Brien's celebration of his bondage will only strengthen their conviction of deterioration and decay. He doesn't argue with these people—he doesn't acknowledge their existence. Still, though conscious of the risks involved, his book underscores arguments against such conservatives.

First, in its one short century, film has produced a body of masterworks, generally acknowledged as contributions to the world's cultural legacy by all except those who are determined a priori not so to acknowledge them. Second, bluntly and baldly, film cannot now be uninvented; and the acceptance of this fact is a great deal more than reconciliation to change. Film at high or low level, at every level, has accomplished something impossible for any other art or phenomenon in the world. Film is the greatest commonality of the human race outside the physical functions of our bodies.

Religions divide us, usually into large groups, but they divide. Politics—international though many of us once intended it to be—is a heartbreak. But I know, as every one of us knows and as O'Brien implies, that the most secret places in myself and in Pope John Paul II and in an Argentinian rancher and in a Mongolian merchant have been touched by the same agency. Nothing else compares.

If it is complained that this agency is invasive, disruptive, possibly cheapening, no adequate denial can be made: the charge is true. What is wrong with it is that it is incomplete. The sublimities possible only to film also exist. A price must be paid for everything. The price paid for film exaltation is a certain (in two senses) vulgarization.

O'Brien embraces the whole truth, entire. As bard for millions, he sings the thralldom as well as the enlightenment that has showered on us out of the dark. He understands that his head might have been clearer in a world without film but that it would also have been duller. As with so very many of us through the past century, he is like someone who is made in some degree miserable by love but is unable to forswear it.

He is not the first to inscribe this condition. (See, for just two instances, John Hollander's long poem "Movie-Going" or various pages in *A Twentieth-Century Job* by the exiled Cuban film critic G. Cabrera Infante.) O'Brien will not be the last. But his stroboscopic images of a mind that movies have made and remade, deformed and reformed, straitened and enlarged, are dazzling. They fuse into an aptly pyrotechnical celebration of film's first century. •

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The Importance of Territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab states possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

"Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the 'West Bank'."

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian Arab terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time", neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank".

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

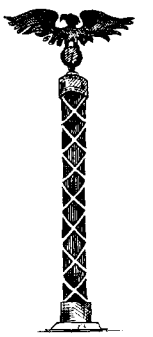
Close encounters of the Nazi kind

ONE MUST HAVE A HEART OF stone to watch *Schindler's List* without crying; but it is also a part of Steven Spielberg's achievement to have fulfilled every director's dream, which is to make a film that will bring about a collapse of criticism. All the adulation somewhat astonishes me. What is at stake, it begins to seem, is the honor of Hollywood. Here is a big and grim movie about the biggest and grimmest subject, and its final frame says "For Steve Ross." Gravity has made peace with the grosses. Of course, gravity in Hollywood is a random force: a few years ago the American people were instructed with moral and visual eloquence that Lyndon B. Johnson conspired to murder John F. Kennedy. So we have a little luck to be thankful for. This time the subject was right for the eloquence.

BUT THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH the American people was owed this film. For no figure in American culture has worked harder to stupefy it, to stuff it with illusion, to deny the reality of evil, to blur the distinction between fantasy and fact, and to preach the child's view of the world than Steven Spielberg. In the years when filmmakers and poets and novelists and painters and composers were wrestling with the possibility, or the impossibility, of treating radical evil in art, Spielberg was teaching actors to sculpt mountains out of mashed potatoes in anticipation of their redemption by cuddly visitors from another planet. Oh, it was well done, and it was enchanting. But the inverse proportion between the maturity of the technology and the maturity of the worldview was so great that finally Spielberg's work came to seem like a genial cynicism, which is Hollywood's cynicism of choice.

NOW THE CRITICS, ALMOST EVERY one of them, are demanding that we celebrate this man's late passage into adulthood as a turning point in the culture. They say that he has made a "masterpiece." Does none of them see how hale and self-regarding *Schindler's List* is? Its renunciation of color is adduced as a sign of its stringency; but the black and white of this film is riper than most color. (*The Ghetto of Madame de...*, I thought during its first hour.) The glints and the gleams are smart. The edges of the frame are faded. (The film is designed to look like a restored print of itself.) The shadows are exquisite. The darkness of this film about darkness, in sum, is gorgeous. And its gorgeousness gives it away. For it is a sign that Spielberg has not grasped his material, that the old relation between skill and understanding still obtains.

I REFER NOT MERELY TO THE film's mistakes. (Its Jewish mistakes are the most annoying ones: when they enter the ghetto, for example, the Jews of Kraków greet each other in Israeli Hebrew.) I refer, rather, to the complete absence from this film of any humility before its subject. This is not material, after all, that is easily mastered. Traces of difficulty, therefore, are signs of seriousness. But there are no traces of difficulty in *Schindler's List.* Very robustly Spielberg just barrels through. His camera confidently follows naked Jewish women right through the door of the "showers" at Auschwitz, which turn out to be, in this case, showers. This sadistic trick was played on a cousin of mine, who walked into, and then out of, the gas chamber at Auschwitz. I have reflected a long time on her experience, and I must say that there is a point beyond which my mind has failed to follow her. The point is the door.



THE POWER OF REALISM IN ART IS owed to the continuity between the world which it makes and the world in which, and for which, it is made. For this reason, the realistic depiction of radical evil must end, if it is to stay honest, where the continuity ends. The smooth segue of Spielberg's camera from life outside the door of the gas chamber to life inside the door of the gas chamber shows that no discontinuity has been observed. No limit has been met. No rupture has reared itself. The mind of the moviemaker has not hit a bump. But there is a more egregious example of Spielberg's inausterity, of his misplaced David Leanism. In 1944, as the Red Army approached, the commandant of the concentration camp at Plaszow was ordered to open the mass graves and exhume the bodies of the thousands of Jews who were murdered during the liquidation of the ghetto in Kraków in 1943 (the liquidation of the ghetto is the most unforgettable passage in Spielberg's film) and to burn the bodies in pits. Anybody who has seen photographs or films of these fiery, open-air charnels knows that the camera has probably never recorded a sight more obscene. But here was a director, and wardrobe and makeup, poring over the tone of charred flesh, the hollowing of rotted skulls, the disposition of mangled bones, to get it right. What on earth did they think they were doing? Do they really think that they got it right?

THE SCENE IS CHILLING, BUT THE scene is a facsimile; and so the greater the verisimilitude, the lesser the verisimilitude. There are facsimiles that are chilling merely for having been made. *Schindler's List* proves again that, for Spielberg, there is a power in the world that is greater than good and greater than evil, and it is the movies. He is hardly alone in this cineaste's theodicy. Thus, a few weeks after the film opened, a good and learned friend of mine remarked that it opened not a moment too soon, with "Holocaust revisionism" loose in the land. I retorted that it is wrong and abject to believe that the Holocaust needs "proving," even if *The New Yorker* recently published an essay, bizarrely called "Evidence of Evil," and more bizarrely called, on the magazine's cover, "Bringing Auschwitz Back to Life," in which it acclaimed the discovery by a penitent Holocaust revisionist in France of the "one single proof" that an impenitent Holocaust revisionist in France had demanded. The discussion about "Holocaust revisionism" is not a "debate" between a "view" that it happened and a "view" that it did not happen; it is a war between a truth and a disease. More to the point, Spielberg's movie does not "prove" a thing, since it is *only a movie.* In the matter of the Holocaust, too, Hollywood must not be mistaken for history. It will be a good thing if *Schindler's List* brings down the number of Americans who wonder whether the Holocaust really happened, but it will not be a great thing.

I DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE GLIBness of Spielberg's film (though there is nothing glib about Ben Kingsley's or Ralph Fiennes's performance) is glibness in a good cause. But Americans are quickly moved. There is something a little exhilarating about all these tears. I'd prefer a bit more stunning into silence. Americans escape easily from reality and they are not easily returned to it; and *Schindler's List* dispatches them in both directions. It transports its audience to the basest moment in history and calls it a wrap.

LEON WIESELTIER

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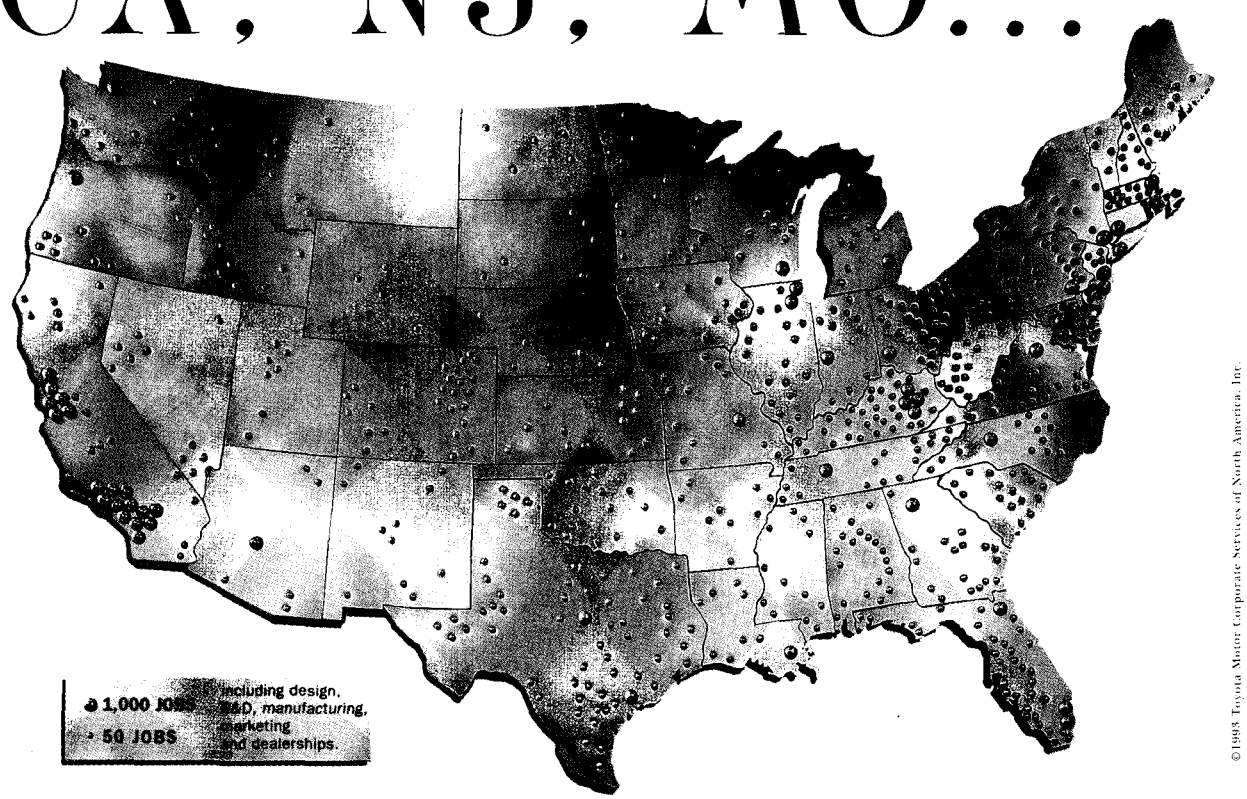

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